BX 5137 .W548 1774
Wilton, Samuel
A review of some of the
articles of the Church of

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A

REVIEW

OF SOME OF THE

ARTICLES

OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

[Price Four Shillings.]

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REVIEW

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ARTICLES

OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

TO WHICH

A SUBSCRIPTION is required

OF

Proteſtant Diſſenting Miniſters.

By SAMUEL WILTON.

To the Law and to the Teſtimony; if they ſpeak not according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in them. ISAIAH.

——————— Eripe turpi
Colla jugo. Liber, liber ſum, dic age.

HORATIUS.

LONDON:

Printed for J. BUCKLAND, in Pater-noſter Row; J. ROBSON, in New Bond-Street; W. HARRIS, in St. Paul's Church-yard; and S. GARDNER, in Gracechurch-Street.

MDCCLXXIV.

PREFACE.

THOSE who are prejudiced in favour of all opinions, which have the ſanction of publick authority, will naturally be led to entertain a very unfavourable idea of the deſign of this publication. And though I am very little concerned about the cenſures which may be paſſed upon the Author, for venturing ſo freely to examine eſtabliſhed opinions; I am by no means equally indifferent to the great and important cauſe, which this publication is intended to ſerve.

If the requiſition of a ſubſcription to the Thirty-nine Articles, was limited to thoſe who ſeek the emoluments and preferments of the Church by Law eſtabliſhed, there would be ſome *faint ſhadow* of juſtice in the charge of indecency upon Proteſtant Diſſenters, in calling in queſtion

the truth and propriety of the national Creed. But the caſe is far different, when a ſubſcription to almoſt all of the Articles, is made the indiſpenſable condition of a legal Toleration, to thoſe who have not the leaſt inclination or deſire, to reap the worldly advantages of a national Eſtabliſhment.

Yet it is probable theſe objections had never ſeen the light, if none but the Miniſters or Members of the Eſtabliſhed Church, had pleaded againſt the abolition of the preſent Teſt of qualification. But ſome few perſons who are ſeparated from the Communion of the Church of *England*, appear to be not only fully ſatisfied with the authority of the Magiſtrate, to impoſe a ſubſcription to human explanatory Articles upon the conſciences of Chriſtians; but alſo to be perfectly *enamoured* with all thoſe Articles, to which a ſubſcription is now required of Proteſtant Diſſenting Miniſters. Hence they vehemently oppoſed the relief of more ſcrupulous conſciences, upon the apparent preſumption, that however any propoſed

alteration might favour the majority of Diſſenting Miniſters, it would have ſome very injurious influence upon their hopes, their comfort, and their obedience. Chriſtian charity would therefore forbid an attempt, which, if crowned with ſucceſs, would be productive of ſuch unhappy conſequences to any of our Fellow-chriſtians. But as I was firmly perſuaded, that the ſacred Scriptures, without the aid of eſtabliſhed Creeds, are ſufficient to anſwer every purpoſe neceſſary to Chriſtian edification and conſolation; ſo it alſo appeared to me, that many of the Articles to which our ſubſcription is required, were very far from having the moſt remote tendency to theſe ends; and that ſome of them ſeemed to wear a very contrary aſpect. This apprehenſion led me in a former publication, to intimate my ſuſpicions, that the high opinion ſome Diſſenters entertained of the Articles, was grounded upon a very imperfect examination into their true meaning; and that a voluntary ſubſcription to them, had in all probability frequently reſulted, from a general apprehenſion of their or-

thodoxy, without entering into a critical inquiry into the ſenſe of each. The Expoſition here attempted, is deſigned more fully to juſtify the repreſentation therein given. Upon this account, I have frequently brought into view, the high encomium paſſed upon the Articles by our proteſting Brethren, that the propriety of my concluſion may be more eaſily determined. To this end, I have endeavoured to inveſtigate the genuine ſenſe of ſome of the Articles, and to point out the difficulties of ſubſcription thence reſulting, to Proteſtant Diſſenters of *every* denomination. I have confined my attention to objections of this general nature. The authorities produced in ſupport of the ſeveral explications, will, I hope, be thought unexceptionable by every candid and impartial Reader. It has been my ſtudy that they ſhould be ſo. And if the teſtimony of Divines of the Church of *England*, and the deciſions of the Canon Law are called in queſtion, it will be impoſſible to find any authority which will not be diſputed.

The aſſiſtance I have derived from former Expoſitors, has, I confeſs, been much leſs than might have been expected or wiſhed. But the truth is, that there never yet has appeared any Expoſitor, who has entered thoroughly into the diſcuſſion of all the doctrines of the Articles. I was long ſince convinced of the propriety of an obſervation, lately made by a learned Prelate, who has moſt honourably diſtinguiſhed himſelf, by writing againſt ſubſcription to Articles of Faith: That the Thirty-nine Articles are not to be conſidered as only Thirty-nine Propoſitions. But in fact, they have been too frequently conſidered in this light; and Expoſitors ſeem to have imagined, that when they had treated upon the general ſubject of an Article, they had expounded the whole of it.

It is the fartheſt from my intention, to inſinuate that any of my Brethren, do really hold all thoſe opinions, which I have pointed out as juſtly exceptionable in the Articles; however naturally ſuch a concluſion may ſeem to follow, from the

the manner in which they have expreſſed their approbation of them. I am much rather inclined to think, that they were not aware, or did not believe that ſuch was the real ſenſe of the Articles; or at leaſt, that they did not attend to it, when they ſo highly extolled the national Creed. And if any of them ſhould be convinced of the propriety of my explication, I doubt not, their veneration for the Articles will in no ſmall degree be leſſened. But if any ſhould yet think, that a very different interpretation is equally favoured by the literal ſenſe, I cannot but hope they will allow, that the authorities produced are, at leaſt, ſufficient to juſtify the *doubts* of others, without involving them in the guilt of unpardonable hereſy. This conceſſion will be ſufficient to my purpoſe.

It was not poſſible to avoid occaſionally touching upon ſome of the points in diſpute, between the Church of *England* and the Diſſenters; but I have ſaid much the leſs upon them, as they have been ſo largely treated by others. Nor is it the deſign

deſign of the following Sheets, ſo much to inquire into the truth of our diſtinguiſhing Tenets; as to point out the inconſiſtency of ſome of the Articles with thoſe principles, which, *as Proteſtant Diſſenters*, it muſt be ſuppoſed *we* hold to be true. Indeed to have attempted a defence of them at large, would in me have been only *agere melius actum*. For ſo long as the Diſſenting Gentleman's Letters remain unanſwered, it will be a needleſs attempt. And without pretending to the gift of prophecy, one may venture to foretell, that the men of this generation will not live to ſee them refuted.

In the cloſe of this Review, I have inſiſted more largely upon ſome things, than may be thought abſolutely neceſſary to the ſcope of the Argument. But as they have a natural relation, to ſome of the profeſſed grounds of oppoſition to the Application of the Diſſenters; an Advocate for Chriſtian Liberty, may hope to be pardoned for taking ſuch an opportunity, of bearing his teſtimony againſt a moſt

moſt unrighteous perſecution; which appears ſo evidently to have taken it's riſe, from an irreconcilable averſion to certain doctrines of the Articles.

There is no reaſon to expect that any thing here advanced, will be effectual to convince thoſe, whoſe zeal and prepoſſeſſions, or party-views and connections determine their minds againſt all evidence; and will not ſo much as allow them to *ſuſpect* the truth of any thing they have profeſſed to believe, or have formerly ſubſcribed.

Perhaps however ſome of our Brethren of the Epiſcopal Perſuaſion, who are utterly averſe to the diſtinguiſhing tenets of Proteſtant Diſſenters; may be hereby led to diſapprove the requiſition of our ſubſcription, to ſome of the Articles here reviewed; as diſcerning the great and manifeſt impropriety, of making a ſubſcription to any Articles, totally inconſiſtent with the principles common to all Diſſenters, the indiſpenſable condition of their Toleration. For it is preſumed, that

that Epiſcopalians, who are conſcientiouſly attached to their principles as ſuch, would think themſelves hardly treated, if under a Preſbyterian Eſtabliſhment, a ſubſcription to the truth of an Article, *denying any diſtinction between Biſhops and Preſbyters*, ſhould be made the parallel condition, of tolerating the Miniſters of an Epiſcopal Church.

It is alſo hoped that ſuch as are by profeſſion Proteſtant Diſſenters, but are unhappily ſo biaſſed by various prejudices, as to be wholly uninfluenced by a juſt regard to the common rights of conſcience, and the true principles of Toleration; may be brought to approve an Application, grounded upon more liberal principles than their own, if they ſhould diſcover any reaſon to queſtion the perfect conformity of the Articles of the Church, to what *they themſelves* believe to be true. And if this Expoſition ſhould happily contribute, to produce ſuch an alteration in their views and conduct, I ſhall eſteem myſelf amply recompenſed.

I have

I have no ſiniſter or party-views in this publication. My ſole intention is to ſerve the common cauſe of Chriſtian truth and liberty; and to promote that eſteem and veneration for the ſacred Scriptures, which as Proteſtants we ought ever zealouſly to maintain; but which have been greatly and fatally leſſened, by that undue reverence which has been paid to eſtabliſhed human deciſions.

I am conſcious of many defects in the execution of this work, over which, I hope, the friends of the cauſe will generouſly caſt the veil of candour.

That the God of Truth may ſucceed this feeble and imperfect attempt, for the advancement of his own glory, and promoting the unity, peace, and proſperity of the Church of Chriſt, is the fervent prayer of the Author,

S. W.

Lower Tooting,
March 8, 1774.

INTRO-

INTRODUCTION.

THE application of the Proteſtant Diſſenting Miniſters to Parliament, to be releaſed from the obligation to ſubſcribe the articles of the church of *England*, as the condition of legal toleration, has been variouſly repreſented and underſtood. The adverſaries of the Diſſenters bill have not ſcrupled to aſſert, that our objections to the preſent eſtabliſhed mode of qualification, were merely the offspring of infidelity. The principal argument, by which ſuch a groſs miſrepreſentation has been ſupported, is drawn from the ſuppoſed perfect conformity of the articles of the church of *England*, to the ſacred ſcriptures. Upon this occaſion the moſt extravagant encomiums have been paſſed upon the eſtabliſhed formula of faith. The articles of the Church have ſometimes been dignified with the appellation of the *very articles of Chriſtianity*; and at other times, *yet more modeſtly*, ſet far above the Scriptures in point of uſe and importance. I ſhall however leave the propriety of ſuch deciſions to the

judgment of the impartial reader, when he has perused the following sheets; at present only observing, that the truth or falshood of the articles, was but a secondary consideration with us in the late application to Parliament. The first and general objection of the Dissenters, to the present requisition of the toleration-act, is grounded upon the opinion they entertain, of the supreme and sole authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Head and Lawgiver of his church—of the right of private judgment—and the sufficiency and perfection of the Scriptures. These are opinions which they cannot possibly reconcile to the claim of the state, to impose any explanatory articles upon the consciences of Christians, as a condition of toleration. They look upon human authority to be an incompetent one in all matters of religion, which is a personal concern between God and a man's own conscience; and that every exertion of it, in this case, is an infringement upon the natural and unalienable rights of conscience. However agreeable therefore the articles might be to their own private opinions, this objection would still be left in its full force.

But we do not wish it to be concealed, that a great number among us, do not apprehend, there is that strict conformity between the sacred scriptures and the articles of the church

of *England* which others contend for. Wherein they differ, is a queſtion variouſly determined by men of various opinions. All the writers againſt the articles, which have ever fallen in my way, have particularly oppoſed thoſe doctrines contained in them, which are commonly known by the name of *Orthodoxy*. Why they ſuffered others to enjoy an undiſturbed repoſe, I take not upon me to determine. Hence however it ſeems to have been generally, but, as I hope to ſhew, very erroneouſly concluded, that none but *Socinians*, *Arians*, and *Arminians*, can have any objection to the doctrines of thoſe articles, which we are required to ſubſcribe.

I profeſs, in common with many of my brethren, that I can neither intirely agree with thoſe, who, on the one hand, repreſent the articles as perfectly conſonant to the Scriptures; nor with thoſe on the other, who have objected to doctrines contained in them, which upon the authority of Scripture I receive; but which, in my opinion, are much better expreſſed in ſome other human ſyſtems, than in the articles of the church of *England*, and beſt of all in the Bible itſelf.

I mean no reflection upon the character of the Reformers, whoſe memory I greatly revere.

Indeed whoever conſiders their ſituation, will, I am ſure, commend their wiſdom and prudence in conducting that important and glorious revolution, which took place in conſequence of their noble proteſt againſt the corruptions of the church of *Rome*. To have attempted a complete reformation at once, even ſo far as they ſaw it wanting, would have been a viſionary ſcheme. It is eaſy to diſcern, that it was the wiſdom of the firſt Reformers to proceed with great caution and deliberation—to make that a work of time, which, if it was ever done effectually, muſt be done by ſlow degrees; for we have had many inſtances of ſimilar deſigns being totally defeated, by too great a precipitance in the meaſures adopted, and too quick advances even in the good work of reformation. Prejudices which have been long eſtabliſhed, and are deeply riveted in the human mind, are neither eaſily nor ſpeedily to be eradicated; eſpecially when they are favoured by having worldly intereſt on their ſide, and penalties and perſecutions ſtand in the way of oppoſing and renouncing them. It was therefore wiſely ordered by a ſuperintending Providence, that the Reformation ſhould be begun by aiming the firſt blow againſt thoſe corruptions, which were both moſt notorious in themſelves, and had at the ſame time the leaſt intereſt in the prejudices of the vulgar. Indeed, ſtrictly ſpeaking, thoſe who

who firſt diſtinguiſhed themſelves in this good work, were too ſtrongly attached to many of the groſs corruptions of the idolatrous church of *Rome*, to carry the Reformation to any great length. It is well known, that *John Hus*, and *Jerome* of *Prague*, ſuffered martyrdom only for their "oppoſition to the pomp, pride, avarice, "and other wicked enormities of the Pope, "Cardinals, and Prelates of the church; and "becauſe they could not abide the high digni-"ties and livings of the church; while they "were themſelves believers in the doctrines of "tranſubſtantiation, the ſeven ſacraments, and "other diſtinguiſhing tenets of the church of "*Rome**." Nor did the Leaders of the Reformation in our own country, intirely renounce all her erroneous doctrines and ſuperſtitions. But without entering minutely into the hiſtory of the period in which the church of *England* was eſtabliſhed, I would only obſerve, that, after the Reformers had gradually purged the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, from many corruptions both of faith and worſhip, human authority unhappily interpoſed, to put a period to the progreſs of reformation, by eſtabliſhing, together with a partial reformation, ſome conſiderable remains of antichriſtian error and ſuperſtition †.

To

* Fox's Acts and Monuments, Edit. 9. 1684. large paper. Vol. I. p. 718, 722, & ſeq.

† The opinion of the firſt Reformers and Martyrs, has

To the moſt heroic exerciſe of a freedom of inquiry, and the moſt laudable oppoſition to human

been frequently urged as a reaſon againſt objecting to any ſentiments, which had the ſanction of their judgment and approbation. The language, uſed by ſome perſons on this head, ſeems to intimate, that it is eſſential to being true Proteſtants, to maintain all the opinions held by thoſe, who firſt diſtinguiſhed themſelves as friends to the Reformation. But ſuch perſons forget, that, according to the *fundamental principle* of Proteſtantiſm, we muſt bring the ſentiments of the Reformers to the ſame teſt with all others. It more eſpecially becomes Proteſtant Diſſenters to recollect, that Puritaniſm owed its riſe to the perſuaſion our forefathers had, that there was a neceſſity for a much farther reformation in ſome points both of doctrine and diſcipline. The moſt zealous aſſertors of the opinion I am now controverting, are not, I apprehend, aware of the concluſions which will follow from their own principles; and are probably ignorant of many of the tenets of the Reformers. For otherwiſe, it cannot without a breach of charity be ſuppoſed, that they would preſs upon any the obligation of believing and approving, whatever the firſt Reformers believed and approved. Of this the Reader may judge from the following ſpecimens.

There is no inconſiderable taint of the doctrines and ſuperſtitions of the church of *Rome*, in the Injunction which made expreſs proviſion, "that ſuch images as the clergy "knew in any of their cures to be or to have been abuſed "with pilgrimage or offering of any thing made there-"unto, or that ſhould be afterwards cenſed unto, they (and "none other private perſons) ſhould, for the avoiding of "that moſt deteſtable offence of idolatry, forthwith take "down, or cauſe to be taken down, and deſtroy the ſame; "and ſhould ſuffer from thenceforth no torches or candles,

human authority in matters of religion, we are indebted, under God, for the riſe and progreſs of

" dles, tapers or images of wax to be ſet afore any image " or picture, *but only two lights upon the high altar, before " the* SACRAMENT, which, for the ſignification that Chriſt " is the very true light of the world, they ſhould ſuffer to " remain ſtill: admoniſhing their pariſhioners, that images " ſerve for no other purpoſe but to be a remembrance, " whereby men may be admoniſhed of the holy lives and " converſation of them that the ſaid images do repreſent." This cuſtom of placing two lights upon the altar, is ſtill retained in all Cathedral and Collegiate churches, and alſo in ſome others.

The ſame may be obſerved concerning the Injunction, which warranted the continuance of ſeveral other ſuperſtitious cuſtoms under certain limitations, in the following words: " Alſo that they ſhall inſtruct and teach in their cures, that " no man ought obſtinately and maliciouſly to break and " violate the laudable ceremonies of the Church, by the " King commanded to be obſerved, and as yet not abro- " gated. And, on the other ſide, that whoſoever doth " ſuperſtitiouſly abuſe them, doth the ſame to the great " peril and danger of his ſoul's health: as in caſting holy " water upon his bed, upon images, and other dead things; " or bearing about him holy bread, or St. John's goſpel; " or making of croſſes of wood upon Palm-Sunday, in time " of reading of the paſſion, or keeping of private holy days, " as bakers, brewers, ſmiths, ſhoemakers, and ſuch other " do; or ringing of Holy bells, or bleſſing with the Holy " candle, *to the intent thereby to be diſcharged of the burden of " ſin, or to drive away devils, or to put away dreams and phan- " taſies, or in putting truſt and confidence of health and ſalva- " tion in the ſame ceremonies*, when they be only ordained, in- " ſtituted and made, *to put us in remembrance of the benefits " which we have received by Chriſt*. And if he uſe them

of the Reformation; and to the controul of both by the penal ſtatutes, we may juſtly aſcribe its preſent imperfection.

This leads me to take a review of ſome of thoſe articles of the church of *England*, which ſavour ſtrongly of the ſuperſtition and ignorance of the times preceding the Reformation. One queſtion is however neceſſary to be propoſed and determined, previouſly to the examination of the articles themſelves—a queſtion which has indeed been frequently agitated, and very warmly debated, as if it had been one of the moſt difficult queſtions in the world: and yet I hardly know any queſtion which will admit of a more eaſy and plain ſolution. The apparent difficulty has never ariſen out of the queſtion itſelf, but from a painful apprehenſion of the reflections and reproaches, which would natu-

" for *any other purpoſe*, he grievouſly offendeth God." K. Edw. VI. Injunctions, A. D. 1547. Injunct. 4, 28.

The doctrine of Purgatory ſeems to be maintained in the laſt clauſe of the bidding prayer, eſtabliſhed at the ſame time, and by the ſame authority. " Ye ſhall *pray* for all " them that be departed out of this world in the faith of " Chriſt, that they with us, and we with them *at the day* " *of judgment may reſt both body and ſoul*, with ABRAHAM, " ISAAC, and JACOB, in the kingdom of heaven." This form continued in uſe till the year 1559, when it was altered by the authority of Queen *Elizabeth*'s Injunctions; and, inſtead of *praying*, the clergy were, with more propriety, commanded to "*praiſe* God for all thoſe departed out of " this life in the faith of Chriſt."

rally

rally follow the true ſolution of it. The queſtion is this: In what ſenſe are we required to ſubſcribe the articles of the church of England? I anſwer, in the plain, literal, grammatical ſenſe, as underſtood when the articles were ſet forth by publick authority.

In confirmation of the propriety of this ſolution, we need only attend to the language of the Royal declaration *; a declaration, which will by no means admit of the ſubterfuges, to which many ingenious writers have had recourſe, to juſtify a ſubſcription to articles which they do not believe. It is the declared end of the requiſition, "to avoid diverſities of opinions, and "to eſtabliſh conſent touching true religion." In reference to this end, the Royal declaration prohibits the leaſt difference from the ſaid articles. What terms can be more explicit than the following, made uſe of therein? "We will that "no man hereafter ſhall either print or preach "to draw the Article aſide *any way*, but ſhall "ſubmit to it in the *plain* and *full* meaning

* The controverſy, concerning the *date* of the Royal declaration, is not at all material to the purport of my inquiry; as it is on all hands agreed, that it was in force long before the Toleration-Act took place. That it was firſt publiſhed by authority of King *Charles* the Firſt in 1628 is, I think, very ſatisfactorily proved by Dr. *Winchester*, in a tract annexed to his *Diſſertation on the 17th article of the Church of England*.

"thereof;

" thereof; and ſhall not put his *own ſenſe* or " *comment* to be the meaning of the Article, " but ſhall take it in the *literal* and *gramma-* " *tical* ſenſe."

How then is it poſſible, to reconcile a ſubſcription to them only ſo far as *we think them* agreeable to the word of God, with obedience to this Royal mandate? Or how will ſuch a ſubſcription anſwer the end of the requiſition; while men differ ſo much in their opinions, reſpecting the meaſure of agreement, or diſagreement, between the articles of the Church, and the doctrines of chriſtianity? Nor has the *flux of time* created any change in the *literal grammatical* ſenſe of the *article*, whatever revolutions have taken place in the ſentiments of mankind, reſpecting any of the doctrines contained in thoſe articles. So that the plea which has been adopted for vindicating a ſubſcription to them, in that ſenſe which the flux of time has given them, will by no means apply to the terms and conditions, in and upon which alone ſubſcription is allowed. To ſubſcribing them in the ſenſe of the *preſent Impoſers*, there are inſuperable objections; for not to ſay, that the preſent Impoſers ought neither themſelves to have ſubſcribed, nor to admit ſubſcription from others, in a ſenſe different from the *literal* and *grammatical* one; I would add, that it is more

more than probable, all the Impoſers are not agreed among themſelves in their judgment upon theſe points.

Can it be imagined that the whole bench of Biſhops, all the Heads of Houſes in the two Univerſities, and all the Juſtices preſiding in the quarterly ſeſſions throughout the Kingdom, are happily united in opinion upon the doctrines of the Thirty-nine Articles? Yet theſe are all, within their reſpective juriſdictions, Impoſers of the Subſcription on Candidates for holy orders, on Students at Colleges, and Diſſenting Miniſters, who apply for a legal toleration.

In many inſtances we know there is a great diverſity of opinions among them. And hence another difficult queſtion will ariſe. Whoſe opinion ſhall be binding in preference to all the reſt? Beſides, on this ſuppoſition it would be juſtly cenſureable to ſubſcribe, without knowing the ſenſe of the Impoſers; and it is no impertinent inquiry upon this topick, How ſhall we attain that knowledge? Would not a candidate for holy orders, be thought greatly wanting in modeſty and reſpect, if previouſly to his ſubſcription, he ſhould interrogate his Dioceſan upon each of the Thirty-nine Articles, and deſire to have a full and free confeſſion of his faith?

faith? Would not the ſame imputation be faſtened upon Students at the Univerſity? And above all how curious is the conceit, of a Proteſtant Diſſenting Miniſter requeſting the ſenſe of a bench of Juſtices, upon the controverted points of religion? I would not willingly, or indecently reflect upon the piety and learning of their Worſhips; but yet I greatly queſtion, whether in many caſes, they could honeſtly affix *any ſenſe at all* to the articles, as properly ſpeaking *their own*; having moſt probably never ſtudied, if perchance they may have occaſionally read them. And if no ſenſe is given by them, or if they cannot affix any, it will follow that the perſon qualifying, is to ſubſcribe them in no ſenſe whatever; his ſubſcription muſt be a ridiculous unmeaning form. This cannot indeed comport with the deſign of the Legiſlature, otherwiſe it might afford relief to ſome men of ſcrupulous conſciences, thus happily freed from thoſe difficulties about ſubſcription, which the *literal*, or *any given ſenſe* of the *Impoſers* might have created. That they are to be ſubſcribed as *articles of Peace*, is a mere political ſuggeſtion; totally inconſiſtent with the titles, and ſubjects of the articles, and grounded ſolely upon the miſtaken view, which the Compilers might entertain of a neceſſary connection, between an entire uniformity of ſentiment among

all publick teachers, and the peace of the ſtate. They had indeed a reſpect to peace, but then it is to be remembered, that they had a prior regard to ſuch an agreement in opinion, as the *only means of eſtabliſhing and maintaining* that peace. A ſubſcription to them in this view, cannot therefore be juſtified by thoſe who diſbelieve the *truth* of the articles. A late zealous advocate for ſubſcription, has however told us for our relief, that ſome of them were not intended as *Credenda*; i. e. that ſome of the Thirty-nine Articles, all of which the Clergy are bound to ſubſcribe *ex animo*, in teſtimony of their aſſent to them *as agreeable to the word of God* *, were yet never intended to be believed. But till he, or ſome other Divine, equally ſkilled in Logic, and equally learned in political and eccleſiaſtical diſtinctions, ſhall condeſcend to produce ſome better authority for his aſſertion, than his own mere *ipſe dixit*, and to draw the line between thoſe of the one claſs and of the other, I doubt his diſtinction will do little honour to himſelf, and no ſervice at all to us †.

* See Canon 36 of 1603—which clearly ſhews how much advantage may be *honeſtly* taken of this diſtinction.

† See a pamphlet, intitled, *A Letter to the Proteſtant Diſſenting Miniſters who lately ſolicited Parliament for further Relief*, p. 7. which is generally, and I believe juſtly, aſcribed to the Rev. Dr. BUTLER, Archdeacon in the Dioceſe of *Wincheſter* for the parts of *Surry*.

The

The late Dr. *Bennet* juſtly obſerves, that "tho' "the title page of the articles would not afford "us any light with reſpect to the ſenſe of our "ſubſcription to them; yet thoſe Laws, eccle- "ſiaſtical and civil, which injoin the ſubſcrip- "tion, do put the matter beyond all queſtion; "and evidently demonſtrate, that no ſubſcrip- "tion could be meant or allowed, but ſuch "as imported a belief of the articles ſubſcri- "bed." In confirmation of this aſſertion, he refers to ſeveral clauſes in the ſtat. 13 *Eliz.* chap. 12. and to ſeveral canons of the Church. He farther obſerves to the ſame end, that "what the "*Engliſh* copy of the canons of 1603 called "*ſubſcribing unto* the Articles, is in the *Latin* "expreſſed by ſubſcribing *in eorum veritatem*, "that is, ſubſcribing *to the truth* of the Articles. "*Can.* 5. And *ſubſcribing* to the Articles in the "*Engliſh* copy of the 127 *Can.* of the ſame "year, is in the *Latin* expreſſed by *ſubſcriptione* "*ſuâ comprobare.* So little (adds he,) did our "Fore-fathers dream of men's ſubſcribing ſuch "articles as they did not believe true." To this evidence is annexed the determination of all the Judges of *England* as extracted from Lord chief Juſtice *Coke*,* who ſays "I heard *Wray* "chief Juſtice in the King's Bench *paſch* 23 "*Eliz.* report, that where one *Smith* ſubſcribed "to the ſaid Thirty-nine Articles of Religion,

* Inſtit. 4. Cap. 74. p. 324.

"with

" with this addition *(ſo far forth as the ſame* " *were agreeable to the word of God)* it was re- " ſolved by him and all the Judges of *England*, " that this ſubſcription was not according to " the ſtatute of 13th *Eliz.* Becauſe the ſta- " tute required an *abſolute* ſubſcription, and " this ſubſcription made it *conditional*; and " that this Act was made for avoiding of di- " verſity of opinions, &c. and by this addi- " tion the party might by his own private opi- " nion take ſome of them to be againſt the " word of God, and by this means diverſity " of opinions ſhould not be avoided, which " was the ſcope of the ſtatute, and the very " Act itſelf made touching ſubſcription hereby " of none effect." The Doctor alſo maintained upon good authority, that it was " the conſtant " ſenſe and opinion of thoſe, who had the beſt " opportunities of knowing the extent and force " of their ſubſcription to the Articles, that ſuch " ſubſcription obliged them to, and actually " imported a belief of the truth of the Articles " ſubſcribed *."

It is not a little aſtoniſhing, to find the ſame Divine afterwards in the ſame Eſſay, pleading for ſuch a latitude in ſubſcription, as is equally inconſiſtent with the end of ſubſcription, with

* Bennet's Eſſay on the Thirty-nine Articles, ch. xxxiii. p. 413, 417, 419.

that

that latitude he had before oppoſed. For he tells us that "the Church requires only the "belief of the Articles in general; and does "not reſtrain us to the belief of any one arti-"cle or propoſition in any particular ſenſe, "farther than we are confined and determined "by the words themſelves." Upon this apprehenſion, as the Doctor ſuppoſes the *words* of the Articles, to be fairly capable of different and contrary interpretations, he thinks any man's ſubſcription to them may be fully juſtified, "who believes them to be true in any "ſuch ſenſe, as they will reaſonably admit with-"out doing violence to the words*." The inferences drawn by the Doctor from this general principle, if allowed to be juſt, would produce and warrant as great a diverſity of opinions, as if no ſubſcription were injoined to avoid it. And there is juſt the ſame evidence, to ſupport the obligation of all ſubſcribers to believe *every particular Article*, and *every particular propoſition* contained in it, as can be alleged in ſupport of the obligation to a *general* belief of them. And nothing ſeems more abſurd than to ſuppoſe, that Articles drawn up for the purpoſe of *avoiding* diverſity of opinions, ſhould be purpoſely ſo conſtructed, that they might reaſonably admit a *variety* of interpretations *oppoſite* to each other.

* Bennet, ubi ſupra, ch. xxxv. p. 439.

Another

Another expedient has been adopted by ſome perſons, to evade the obligation of believing certain particular doctrines contained in the Articles; which is, to conſider them only as ſo many *definitions of terms*, and not as *affirming the doctrines* ſo defined. By the help of ſuch a jeſuitical evaſion, as has been juſtly obſerved, neither a *Jew* nor a *Turk*, nor a *Papiſt*, would ſcruple to ſubſcribe the Articles, on account of the doctrines contained in them *.

Upon the whole, it appears clearly to me, that the hypotheſis of a latitude intended by the Compilers, and allowed to the Subſcribers, is totally indefenſible in itſelf; nor would ſo many able pens have been drawn in its ſupport, if it had not been the *dernier reſcurce* of men, who wiſhed to juſtify themſelves from the heinous charge of hypocriſy and prevarication, in ſubſcribing to Articles which they were conſcious to themſelves, they did not believe in the plain and literal ſenſe.

The preceding review of this ſubject, is but a very partial and incomplete repreſentation of the different principles, which have in different degrees been applied, to juſtify a conduct which is a reproach to the preachers of the chriſtian

* See Mr. Toplady's *Church of England vindicated from the charge of Arminianiſm*, p. 17.

religion. But the ſame conſiderations which have been urged in the preceding pages, will equally operate againſt every other ſcheme, which has been adopted by the numerous patrons of an *unbelieving* Subſcription. However, ſuch as would ſee this ſubject profeſſedly treated, and purſued thro' all the arts of ſophiſtry, may receive ample ſatisfaction by reading the *Confeſſional*; in which the cauſe of integrity and uprightneſs is pleaded in a moſt maſterly manner, and the inſufficiency of every plea for prevarication, is clearly detected, and juſtly expoſed.

I have only to add upon this point, that it is unqueſtionably evident, that ſo far as Proteſtant Diſſenting Miniſters are concerned in ſubſcription to the Thirty-nine Articles, they are required to ſubſcribe them in the *ſame ſenſe*, and *under the ſame reſtrictions*, with the miniſters of the church of *England*. With this idea then immoveably fixed in our minds, that the plain, literal, grammatical ſenſe, is the *only ſenſe* in which we are to ſubſcribe them, let us ſee how ſuch a ſubſcription will accord, with the opinions of Proteſtant Diſſenters of different denominations, on the ſeveral points of the following Articles.

ARTI-

ARTICLE III.

AS Chriſt died for us, and was buried: ſo alſo is it to be believed, that he went down into Hell.

By *Hell* we commonly underſtand the place of torment, prepared for the wicked in the future and inviſible world. The plain, literal, grammatical ſenſe of this Article ſeems therefore to be, that Chriſt went down into the regions of the *Damned.* But this is no where the doctrine of Scripture, nor is it, I believe, at this day, an Article in the creed of any Proteſtant whatſoever. Some Writers, ſenſible of the difficulties attending the literal interpretation, have beſtowed no ſmall pains, to reconcile the doctrine of this Article, with the language of ſcripture; and many have taken the liberty to put their *own ſenſe* upon it, without carefully examining the ſenſe of the Compilers. I ſhall endeavour to inveſtigate that ſenſe, and impartially weigh the evidence of the different interpretations, given of this much controverted clauſe. And ſince it is on all hands confeſſed, that the Article is grounded upon that formula, which is commonly called the *Apoſtles creed*; it's true meaning may in part be derived, from the beſt evidence we can collect of the ſenſe, in

which the controverted phraſe, was therein uſed, or underſtood.

The conceit of the Schoolmen, that it refers to a partition in Hell, called *Limbus patrum*, or (if you pleaſe) *Purgatory*, where all the good men of the old diſpenſation that died before Chriſt, were detained; does not deſerve the leaſt conſideration. I would not follow a *popiſh* ſcent in explaining the Article of a *proteſtant* Church, any farther than neceſſity conſtrains me.

Others imagine, that as this Article in the creed is mentioned by no writer before *Ruffinus*, and was adopted by him from the creed of the Church at *Aquileia*, in which no mention is made of Chriſt's burial; that this clauſe was probably ſubſtituted as an equivalent expreſſion. But it is ridiculous to ſuppoſe, that can be its meaning in the Article before us, ſince the preceding clauſe aſſerts that he was *buried*, or informs us, how his body was diſpoſed of. This ſeems plainly intended to ſhew us what became of his ſeparated ſpirit. If we admit this ſenſe of the phraſe, the nonſenſical tautology it will introduce, will confute all that has been, or can be ſaid in ſupport of it. Let us only read the Article with this amendment and explication. As Chriſt died for us, and was buried;

ſo *alſo* is it to be believed, that he went down into the Grave, or was *buried.*

The opinion of *Durandus*, that this phraſe ſignifies nothing more, than the efficacious preſence of the Soul of Chriſt in Hell, including a *virtual* motion, by which deſcent, the effects of the death of Chriſt were wrought upon the ſouls in Hell *; is ſo foreign to the moſt obvious ſcope of the words, and ſo entirely deſtitute of the leaſt countenance from any of the Ancients, that I wonder it ſhould ever have been adopted by any writer of learning or judgment.

The metaphorical ſenſe in which *Calvin* underſtands this phraſe, as alluding to the agonies of Chriſt upon the croſs, when he endured the wrath and curſe of God in the room and ſtead of ſinners, can by no means be admitted to be the true ſenſe of the Article in queſtion; becauſe it relates to ſomething *ſubſequent* to his death, and is expreſſed in terms which intimate a removal from one place to another, but which are not at all deſcriptive of any particular ſtate of mind. *Calvin* indeed treats this as a frivolous objection, but his anſwer to it is very unſatisfactory †.

* Durandus Lib. 3. Diſt. 22. Q. 3.

† Calvini Inſtit. Lib. II. Cap. xvi. § 10. Edit. Lug. Bat. 1654.

Upon this ſubject, I am particularly led to conſider the late Lord Chancellor KING's critical hiſtory of the Apoſtles creed. His Lordſhip is not only an able and zealous advocate, for what I conceive to be the true ſenſe of Scripture; but likewiſe endeavours to prove that the moſt natural, eaſy, and unconſtrained interpretation of this perplexed and obſcure Article, is conſonant to that ſenſe. Herein I think his Lordſhip's proof materially defective. To juſtify this concluſion, I beg the reader's attention to the following obſervations, grounded partly on what he offers in ſupport of his opinion, and principally on the conceſſions he makes in favour of the contrary opinion.

With reſpect to Lord KING's opinion, it is firſt to be obſerved, that we have no controverſy with him about the ſenſe of the word *Hades* as uſed in the Scriptures, nor is that the proper ſtate of the queſtion in this inquiry; but in what ſenſe, thoſe paſſages on which the Article in the creed is founded, appear to have been generally underſtood. In like manner it may be farther premiſed, that whatever ambiguity there might be in the *Saxon* original of the *Engliſh* word *Hell*, ſince it is allowed to have been moſt generally uſed to ſignify the infernal regions; and ſince it is not ſo much as queſtioned that it included that idea, no advantage

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can be taken of the original ambiguity of the word, if there is any poſitive evidence, that it was underſtood and uſed in any limited ſenſe by the Compilers of the Articles. Of this we may be able to judge hereafter.

To return to his Lordſhip's hiſtory. He acknowledges that we have not any one word in the *Engliſh* dialect, nor by what he could ever underſtand, in any other of the preſent *European* tongues, to expreſs the *Greek* word *Hades*— that the French word *L'Enfer*, and the *Engliſh* and *Dutch* words *Hell* and *Helle*, are always taken in an evil ſenſe; but obſerves that in the ancient *Engliſh* dialect, it was taken in a larger ſenſe, and has recourſe to the *Saxon* original of the word, to juſtify this larger interpretation. It is derived, he ſays, from the old *Saxon* word *Hil**, or from the participle thereof *Helled*, i. e. *hidden* or *covered*. And from the uſe of the word *Hele* in his time, and I believe at preſent, in the *Weſtern* parts of *England*, ſignifying to *cover*, whence a man that covers a Houſe with tile or ſlate, is called an *Helliar*, he thinks this word is equivalent with the *Greek* word *Hades*, as denoting an *unſeen place* †.

* *Lye* in his Anglo-Saxon Dictionary makes the verb *Helan*.

† See Critical Hiſtory of the Apoſtles Creed, Chap. iv. paſſim.

But to the application of this meaning in the preſent caſe, I think there are ſome ſolid objections. It is remarkable, that we do not find any theological writers, at or about the time when the Articles were compiled, who ever ſpeak of good men as going down into *Hell* upon their removal out of this world; but they appropriated the word *Hell* in their ſermons, and other writings, to ſignify the place of torment. As to the inſtance produced by his Lordſhip, it may rather favour the opinion of the phraſe referring to Chriſt's burial, than of the Soul's being in the ſeparate ſtate. For it is very queſtionable, whether this larger ſenſe of the word *Hell*, where it prevails as a provincial dialect, is ever applied to the departed ſpirit. They might ſay perhaps of the interment of the body, that it was *Heled*, but I much doubt, whether they would uſe the ſame language in reference to the ſoul.

With reſpect to the teſtimonies alleged from the *Greek* and *Latin* heathens, to prove that *Hades* and *Inferi* were underſtood to ſignify the common receptacle of departed ſouls, both good and bad; it is proper to obſerve, we readily allow that ſuch was the conſtant ſenſe of the former, and the frequent ſenſe of the latter word in the pureſt claſſical ages; but whether they were always, or generally underſtood in this

this ſenſe, as adopted by Chriſtian authors into their theological writings, is quite a different queſtion; and no fair inference can be drawn in proof of the affirmative from the heathen writers: eſpecially as he acknowledges, that in the declenſion of the *Greek* and *Latin* tongues, both the words *Hades* and *Inferi* came to be chiefly underſtood in an evil ſenſe.

It is farther to be obſerved, when he treats of the opinions of the Fathers, he confeſſes that ſo early as *Origen*'s time, that ancient writer would not allow the Souls of the godly to go to *Hell*, ſince the reſurrection of Chriſt, as he acknowledged they did before; but ſent them to *paradiſe*, which he aſſigned to be a different place from *Hell*, not in *Hell*, as others believed it to be. His Lordſhip allows farther, that *Origen*'s opinion was followed by ſeveral in the *Weſtern* Church, where it prevailed to the excluſion of the ancient doctrine, and at length came to be appropriated to ſignify a place of torment, or miſery and obſcurity. I will venture add, that we are moſt likely to find the true original ſenſe of this Article, in the opinion of the *Weſtern* Church, which has been moſt generally followed in this part of the world. Among thoſe who held *Origen*'s opinion, he reckons St. *Ambroſe*, and St. *Jerom*; and repreſents *Auſtin* as ſometimes wavering and uncer-

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tain in his apprehenſions of this point. Of the ſame ſentiment, he ſays, were *Petrus Chryſologus*, *Gennadius Maſſilienſis*, *Gregory* the *Great*, and ſeveral others of the ſucceeding writers. But to ſave himſelf the trouble of a diſtinct enumeration of them all, he allows that the generality of the *Latin* Fathers embraced this notion. Now it ſhould be remembered, that this creed came to us through the channel of the *Latin* Church. I will only add with reſpect to ſome paſſages, produced by his Lordſhip to prove, that the ancient Chriſtian writers underſtood the words *Hades* and *Inferi* in the ſenſe he contends for, that they ſeem ſtrongly to favour of the doctrine of purgatory, which accounts for the mode of expreſſion. And we readily grant, that there are many paſſages in the Writings of the *earlier* Chriſtian Fathers, in which the words will not only admit, but require a general conſtruction. But ſince there are many others, particularly referring to the local motion of the ſoul of Chriſt after his death, which cannot poſſibly be taken in ſo large a ſenſe,—paſſages which do not only expreſsly aſſert the deſcent of Chriſt into the regions of the *Damned*, but point out the ſeveral purpoſes effected by it, in terms which will admit of no diſpute; the evidence from the latter, ought ſurely to be conſidered as by far the moſt deciſive.

From

From the preceding review of the evidence as ſtated by his Lordſhip, I conclude that there is very little weight in urging the true ſenſe of *Acts* II. 27, upon which this Article is founded; to prove that the ſenſe of the Compilers of the creed, much leſs of the Compilers of the Articles, was agreeable thereto. For it ſeems that the latter rather made uſe of the judgment of the Fathers, to explain the ſenſe of the Scriptures; than of the Scriptures to correct the opinions of the Fathers.

Upon the whole, though his Lordſhip was led to expound many paſſages in the ancient Chriſtian writers, in favour of the opinion, that what he accounted the true ſenſe of Scripture, was exactly the ſame with the true ſenſe of the Creed; yet it is very evident, as will hereafter appear, that they were differently underſtood by the writers of the Church of *England* before him. So that his explication of the creed, cannot poſſibly be admitted as a rule, whereby to determine the ſenſe of the Article.

We ſhall next examine the ſentiments of the learned Biſhop *Pearſon*, in his expoſition of this Article of the creed*. He has entered very minutely into the conſideration of all the different

* *Pearſon*'s Expoſition, Edit. 12. p. 238—252.

ſenſes,

ſenſes, which have been put upon it; and if the reader has not too ſcrupulous a regard to his own edification, he may make himſelf maſter of all the various conjectures about the ends and effects of Chriſt's going down into Hell, together with the Biſhop's full and particular confutation, of ſome of the moſt ſuperſtitious fancies of the Fathers. The impartial reader will not heſitate to conclude from his Lordſhip's authorities, that the moſt natural and probable interpretation of the creed, is in favour of Chriſt's real deſcent into the place of torment. And yet it is very remarkable, his Lordſhip has been frequently quoted by the moderns, as an authority for a different interpretation. This muſt either be owing to a ſtrange inattention, to the ſtate of the evidence as given by that learned Prelate; or to taking the matter upon truſt, from what his Lordſhip has advanced concerning the general ſignification of the words. But the propriety of the inference, I ſhall readily ſubmit to the judgment of every intelligent Reader.

He has indeed obſerved, that ſome of the ancient Fathers underſtood the word *Hades* to have the ſame comprehenſive ſignification, which it had among the *Greeks*. The Biſhop does not however ſo much as hint, that the word was underſtood in their ſenſe of it by the Compilers; much leſs as importing nothing more

more than ſimply the removal of the ſoul of Chriſt into the intermediate State. From ſome of his quotations from thoſe ancient Fathers, it plainly appears, that the idea they had of the ſtate of the departed ſouls even of *good* men, before the coming of Chriſt, was that of a ſtate of *miſery*, rather than a ſtate of *happineſs*—the proper Purgatory of the *Papiſts*. Comparatively taken, in oppoſition to the ſtate of the wicked, they ſometimes called this an happy ſtate; but much more generally deſcribed it, as a ſtate of expectation of that releaſe and deliverance, which they ſuppoſed was effected by Chriſt's deſcent into this territory of *Hades*. This ſenſe is therefore very little diſtant from the notion of Chriſt's going down into Hell; nor did they mean to *exclude* that idea. So far from it, that the Biſhop ſays, "They who thought that Chriſt "delivered the *Patriarchs* from their infernal "Manſions, did not think ſo excluſively, or "in oppoſition to the diſobedient and damned Spirits; but conceived many of *them* to "be ſaved, as well as the *Patriarchs* were, and "doubted whether all were not ſo ſaved, or no. "Indeed I think, ſays he, there were very "few, if any, for above five hundred years "after Chriſt, which did ſo believe Chriſt deli-"vered the Saints out of Hell, as to leave all "the damned there."

He

He obſerves that *St. Auguſtin* began to queſtion whether the ſouls of the *Patriarchs* and *Prophets* were *apud Inferos*, and conſequently to queſtion Chriſt's going there after them; becauſe he thought the word *Infernus* was never taken in a good ſenſe in the Scriptures. But this is very different from aſſerting, that he was the firſt, or the only Chriſtian Father who held the opinion of Chriſt's going to the *Damned*. On the contrary, he expreſsly aſſerts, that Chriſt's ſhewing himſelf to the ſouls of the departed after his death, and preaching the goſpel to them, in order, that whoſoever of them would yet accept of and acknowledge him, ſhould paſs from death to life, was the general opinion of the Fathers, as the end of his deſcent.

He ſums up the judgment of all the Fathers in theſe words. "Thus did they think the "ſoul of Chriſt deſcended into Hell, to preach "the goſpel to the ſpirits there; that they "might receive Him, who before believed in "Him; or that they might believe in Him, "who before rejected Him." He confirms the truth of theſe repreſentations, by many teſtimonies from their Writings.

Let it alſo be obſerved, that he delivers it as an opinion which did *eſpecially obtain* in the Church of *England*, that the end for which our Saviour

Saviour deſcended into Hell, was to triumph over Satan, and all the powers below, within their own dominions. And though he profeſſedly combats this notion, he does not once urge the third Article of the Church againſt the Advocates for it; which would have been much to his purpoſe, if he had thought it did not refer to the place of torment, or *Hell*, properly ſo called.

But then it will be ſaid perhaps by ſome, Does not the Biſhop's own expoſition of this article of the Creed, warrant the inference that it refers ſolely to the paſſing of the ſoul of Chriſt into the ſeparate ſtate, allotted to the ſouls of the righteous? Now in anſwer to this queſtion, I beg leave to remark, that Biſhop *Pearſon* intended, and endeavoured to give the world ſuch an expoſition, as he thought conformable to the Scriptures; rather than profeſſedly to eſtabliſh the generally received doctrine. He does not therefore give us the leaſt intimation, nor attempt to produce any evidence, that his own interpretation, ſo far as it differs from the opinions he condemned, was the ſenſe of the Compilers. His own account of the principles on which he proceeded in expounding this Article, deſerves our attention in this view. "Our pre-
"ſent deſign, ſays he, is an expoſition of the

" Creed as now it ſtands; and our endeavour " is, to expound it according to the *Scriptures* " in which it is contained. I muſt therefore " look for ſuch an explication, as may conſiſt " with the other parts of the Creed, and may " withal be conformable unto that ſcripture, " upon which the truth of the Article doth " rely. And conſequently whatſoever inter- " pretation is either not true in itſelf, or not " conſiſtent with the body of the Creed, or not " conformable to the doctrine of the Apoſtle " in this particular, the expoſitor of that Creed, " by the doctrine of the Apoſtle, muſt reject." Accordingly upon this ground his Lordſhip rejects the notion of Chriſt's ſuffering the torments of the damned—of his deſcending into Hell *to conquer Satan, ſpoil Hell, and lead captivity captive*—and ſeveral other of the opinions before referred to.

But after all, this learned Prelate ſeems rather to differ in judgment from the generality of the advocates for Chriſt's real deſcent into Hell, about the ends and effects of that deſcent; than as to the place into which He deſcended. The following extracts ſeem fully to juſtify this aſſertion.

" We have already ſhewn the ſubſtance of " the Article, ſays he, to conſiſt in this; that " the

" the ſoul of Chriſt, really ſeparated from his " body by death, did truly paſs unto the places " below, where the ſouls of men departed were. " And I conceive the end, for which He did ſo, " was, that He might undergo the condition " of a *dead* man, as well as of a *living*. He " appeared *here* in the ſimilitude of *ſinful fleſh*, " and went into the other world *in the ſimilitude* " *of a ſinner*."

" Secondly, By the deſcent of Chriſt into " *Hell*, all thoſe which believe in Him are ſe- " cured from deſcending *thither*; He went into " thoſe *regions of darkneſs*, that our ſouls might " never come into thoſe torments which are " *there*. By his deſcent He freed us from our " fears, as by his aſcenſion He ſecured us of " our hopes. He paſſed to thoſe habitations, " *where Satan hath taken up poſſeſſion, and exer-* " *ciſeth his dominion*, that, having no power " over Him, we might be aſſured, that he " ſhould never exerciſe any over our ſouls de- " parted, as belonging unto him. Through " death He deſtroyed him that had the power " of death, that is, the devil; and, by his " *actual deſcent into the dominions of him ſo de-* " *ſtroyed*, ſecured all which have an intereſt in " Him, of the ſame freedom which He had."

——" Having thus examined the ſeveral " interpretations of this part of the article,

" we may now give a brief and ſafe account " thereof; and teach every one, how they " may expreſs their faith, without any danger " of miſtake; ſaying, I give a full and un- " doubting aſſent unto this, as to *a certain* " *truth*, that when all the ſufferings of Chriſt " were finiſhed on the croſs, and his ſoul was " ſeparated from his body, though his body " were dead, yet his ſoul died not; and though " it died not, yet it underwent the condition of " the ſouls of ſuch as die; and being He died " in the *ſimilitude of a ſinner*, his ſoul went to " the place where the ſouls of men are kept " who *die for their ſins*, and ſo did wholly un- " dergo the law of death. But becauſe there " was no ſin in Him, and He had fully ſatis- " fied for the ſins of others which He took up- " on Him, therefore as God ſuffered not his " Holy One to ſee corruption, ſo He left not " his ſoul in Hell; and thereby gave ſufficient " ſecurity to all thoſe who belong to Chriſt, " of never coming under the power of Satan, " or ſuffering in the flames prepared for the " devil and his angels. And thus, and for " theſe purpoſes, may every Chriſtian ſay, I be- " lieve that Chriſt deſcended into Hell."

And thus, if I miſtake not, the principal point of difference between this learned Prelate, and thoſe writers whoſe opinions he had refuted,

is this; that whereas they conſidered Chriſt's deſcent into Hell as reſpecting the ſouls of the Patriarchs, or of the damned which He *found* in the infernal regions; he conſiders it as operating *preventively* to the advantage of ſuch as believe in Chriſt. I perfectly agree with his Lordſhip, in the pious uſe he makes of the doctrine, and the conſolatory inferences he draws from the deſcent of Chriſt into Hell; but my concluſion follows from different premiſes. I ſee no neceſſity for ſuppoſing that He went down into Hell, in order to obtain thoſe deſirable and highly beneficial ends. He ſpoiled principalities and powers when He hung upon the accurſed tree; and obtained a compleat deliverance for all his followers, from the guilt and puniſhment due to ſin, by his atoning ſacrifice, and propitiatory death. How elſe are we to underſtand Him, when He bowed his ſacred head upon the croſs, and in the language of a triumphant conqueror, ſaid, "It is finiſhed."

The judicious Dr. *Barrow* * in his expoſition of the creed, ſeems fully convinced that the moſt probable ſenſe of the Compilers, is utterly irreconcileable both with what he conceives to be the true ſenſe of the original words, and with the more general opinion of the doctrine of Scripture upon this head. In treating on

* See *Barrow*'s Works, Vol. I. p. 442—448. Edit. 1722.

this article he propoſes a threefold inquiry; "either concerning the meaning of the words "(here ſet down) intended by thoſe who in- "ſerted them; or concerning the moſt proper "ſignification of the words themſelves; or con- "cerning the meaning they are with truth ca- "pable of in the caſe, to which they here are "applied." The diſcuſſion of the firſt of theſe inquiries is that which alone concerns me; and on this point the Doctor expreſſes himſelf thus.

"The firſt I reſolve, ſays he, (or rather re- "move) by ſaying; that it ſeems needleſs and "endleſs to diſpute what meaning they (which "placed theſe words here) did intend; ſince, "(1) it is poſſible (and might be declared ſo "by many like inſtances) and perhaps not un- "likely, that they might both themſelves up- "on probable grounds believe, and for plau- "ſible ends propound to the belief of others "this propoſition, without apprehending any "diſtinct ſenſe thereof; as we believe all the "ſcriptures, and commend them to the faith "of others, without underſtanding the ſenſe of "many paſſages therein. And ſince, (2) per- "haps they might by them intend ſome notion "*not certain*, or *not true*, following *ſome con- "ceits then prevalent*, but not built upon any "ſure foundations. And ſince, (3) to ſpeak "*roundly*, their bare authority, whoever they "were

" were (for that doth not appear) could not be " ſuch as to oblige us to be of their minds, " whatever they did mean or intend. We may " owe much *reverence*, but no *entire credence* " to their opinions. Yet (4) if I were bound " to ſpeak my thought, I muſt confeſs; ſup- " poſing they had any diſtinct meaning, they " did mean to ſay, that our Saviour's ſoul did " by a true and proper kind of motion, deſcend " into the regions infernal, or beneath the earth; " where they conceived the ſouls of men were " *detained*; for this appears to have been the " more general and current opinion of thoſe " times, which it is probable they did comply " with herein, whenceſoever fetched, however " grounded."

It is plain from the Doctor's expoſition, that he did not underſtand the Compilers of the creed, as intending by the deſcent of Chriſt into Hell, merely his being in the ſtate of death, or ſimply the paſſing of his ſoul into any place allotted to be the common receptacle of the ſouls both of good and bad; ſince he conſiders both theſe opinions diſtinctly, as belonging not to his *firſt*, but to the *ſecond* and *third* inquiries he had propoſed. What he means by the *conceits then prevalent*, and by the deſcent of Chriſt's ſoul into the regions infernal, where the ſouls of men were *detained*, is farther illuſtrated by him at

the cloſe of his expoſition; where he mentions thoſe conceits again, as referring to the old exploded doctrine, on which he paſſes a general cenſure.

Great credit is due to the opinion of Dr. *Barrow* upon this head; for all who are converſant with his writings muſt allow, that he was exceeded by few, if any, authors in ſolid good ſenſe; and that his judgment upon ancient opinions always appears to be the reſult of diligent and accurate inquiry. Indeed the nature and turn of his genius would not allow him to treat any ſubject ſuperficially. It may not be amiſs juſt to add, that the Doctor's interpretation of the original words, as uſed in thoſe ſcriptures on which the article is founded, is in favour of the ſuppoſition that they reſpect the body rather than the ſoul of Chriſt; and import no more than his being laid in the grave, or coming under the law, condition, and ſtate of death. The reader may ſee the moſt ſolid arguments in favour of this opinion, very judiciouſly handled by this learned Divine.

But before I diſmiſs the conſideration of the Doctor's expoſition, I ſhall beg leave to ſubjoin a few additional remarks upon the *reſolution*, (or as he himſelf rather terms it the *removal*) of his firſt inquiry.

1. I can by no means approve ſubſcribing an aſſent, *ex animo*, to any human creed intended to hold forth a compendious view of the truths of Chriſtianity, without apprehending any diſtinct ſenſe of the doctrine it contains.

2. When it is granted, that thoſe conceits *were prevalent at the time when this article was inſerted in the creed*, there was no need to ſay, "*perhaps*" they were intended by the Compilers. The prevalence of ſuch opinions at that time, is *demonſtration* that they were intended. For if the creed had been deſigned to hold forth any doctrine inconſiſtent with thoſe conceits, it would not have been accounted orthodox, nor have been received into the church. I will venture the juſtice of this inference upon an appeal to the general tenor of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory. The popular idea of hereſy hath always been, that it is an opinion contrary to the generally received doctrine; and whatever opinion was ſo, whether right or wrong in itſelf, was equally cenſured as heretical, upon that much admired preſumption in all ages, that the public judgment has the better chance to be right.

3. Though I readily allow, upon the grand principle of Proteſtantiſm, that the bare authority of the Compilers cannot oblige us to be of their minds; yet, through an unhappy inattention to this principle, the Church of *England* does require, *not only much reverence*, but,

an entire credence to her opinion of this doctrine, as ſtated in the creed, and adopted into her articles. And therefore the apprehenſion, that the ſenſe of the creed differs from the ſenſe of the Scripture, is an inſuperable objection to ſubſcribing to the truth of the article.

Many writers who diſapprove the notion of Chriſt's deſcent into the place of torment, always interpret the creed in favour of that ſenſe which they take to be moſt agreeable to Scripture; but upon no other authority than the unwarrantable preſumption, that the creed and the ſcriptures muſt neceſſarily agree. Hence they intirely overlook, or totally diſregard the abundant evidence in favour of a contrary ſuppoſition. Of the generality of ſuch writers I have taken no notice; for the mere aſſertion of moderns, unſupported by the teſtimonies of antiquity, are no juſt rule of interpretation; and deſerve no regard in determining the original meaning of the Compilers. It might perhaps however be thought diſreſpectful, not to pay ſome little attention to what a late Metropolitan of the Church of *England*, has advanced upon this ſubject. After having rejected the different exploded opinions of the ſenſe of this Article, he adds; "And indeed the moſt common meaning not only among Heathens, but Jews, and the firſt Chriſtians, of the word *Hades*, here

" here tranſlated *Hell*, was in general, that in-
" viſible world, one part or another of which,
" the ſouls of the deceaſed, whether good or
" bad, inhabit. And this how ſtrange ſoever
" it may ſeem to the unlearned, yet is by others
" acknowledged."—He then refers to Bp. *Pear-ſon* on this Article. It follows, " Probably
" therefore, all that was intended to be taught
" by the expreſſion now before us, is, that
" when our Saviour died, as his body was laid
" in the grave, ſo his ſpirit went where other
" ſeparate ſpirits are. And we ſhould remem-
" ber in repeating theſe words of the creed,
" that this is the *whole* of what we are bound
" to profeſs by them *."

Here are poſitive concluſions, from at beſt very doubtful premiſes. The reference to Biſhop *Pearſon* will not countenance or warrant his Grace's inferences. That learned expoſitor, as we have already ſeen, does not repreſent the primitive ſenſe or acceptation of the original words, as a ſufficient authority for interpreting the creed in conſiſtency with it; but on the contrary, produces numerous authorities for ſuppoſing this Article to have a very different meaning. There was therefore no foundation for his Grace's *probability*; and the inference drawn

* See Abp. *Secker*'s Lectures on the Church Catechiſm, Edit. 3. p. 70, 71.

from

from that ſuppoſed probability, falls intirely to the ground. There is much more reaſon to believe and remember, in repeating theſe words of the creed, that thoſe who would hold this Article in the ſenſe of the Compilers, are bound to profeſs a belief in *much more* than his Grace will allow.

To ſum up the evidence derived from that formula which is commonly called the Apoſtles creed. When I conſider the abundant proof which the remains of Chriſtian antiquity afford, that it was the opinion of the Fathers that Chriſt actually deſcended into a place of torment—— when I conſider the curious controverſies among them about his errand to *Hell* —— and reflect on the reverence which the Church of *Rome*, and the Church of *England* have ever paid to the deciſions of the Fathers, I have not the leaſt doubt remaining, that this was the meaning intended to be handed down from age to age, by the original Compiler or Compilers of the creed; and by thoſe who have continued the ſtanding uſe of it in the Church. Though I muſt obſerve by the way, that it therefore forfeits the honourable appellation it now bears; for ſurely this was no part of the Apoſtles creed.

I ſhall now proceed to examine the ſentiments of ſome of the moſt conſiderable writers of the Church

Church of *England*, who have written upon the thirty-nine Articles themſelves.

The learned Biſhop *Burnet* rejects the literal ſenſe of the Article as falſe in itſelf; but has no evidence to produce that this was not the ſenſe of the Compilers. So far from it, that he ſays concerning the opinion of Chriſt's local deſcent into Hell, "This has one great advan-" tage on its ſide, that thoſe who firſt prepared " the Articles in King *Edward*'s time were " of this opinion; for they made it a part of it, " by adding in the Article, thoſe words of St. " *Peter*, 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19. as the proof or ex-" planation of it. Now though that period was " left out in Queen *Elizabeth*'s time, yet no de-" claration was made againſt it; ſo that this ſenſe " was once in poſſeſſion, and was never expreſs-" ly rejected: Beſides that, it has great ſupport " from the authority of many Fathers, who " underſtood the *deſcent into Hell* according to " this explanation *." Of the true ſcripture ſenſe he thinks the words barely "capable." And how? Becauſe the *Greek* word *Hades* was uſed in that large ſenſe at the time of writing the New Teſtament, without giving the leaſt intimation, that the *Engliſh* word *Hell* was uſed in the ſame comprehenſive ſenſe by the Compilers

* See Bp. *Burnet*'s Introduction to his Expoſition of the Articles, p. 10. Edit. 6. 8vo.

of

of the Articles, which was ſurely neceſſary to the proof. When he ſays at the cloſe, "It is "a good ſenſe that may be well put on the "words," he plainly means, merely becauſe it is a good one in itſelf. Indeed ſo ſenſible is he of a defective proof that it is the real ſenſe of the Article, that he takes occaſion from the omiſſion of the clauſe reſpecting Chriſt's *Burial*, in the firſt creeds wherein this Article was inſerted, to allege that circumſtance, together with *Ruffinus*'s interpretation, for giving credit to the opinion, that it was ſubſtituted in the room of that clauſe; and originally underſtood to refer only to the interment of the body of Chriſt *. The idea of a latitude of interpretation of every controvertible Article, was a favourite idea with good Bp. *Burnet*. The fact ſeems to be, that this was the only expedient left, by which he could ſerve the purpoſe of that great Prelate, who firſt moved him to undertake his Expoſition, conſiſtently with what he had before advanced in his *Hiſtory of the Reformation*, concerning the purport of Subſcription †. In this critical ſituation, it was no wonder the work ſhould turn out one of the moſt unſatisfactory products of learned labour, which the world ever ſaw. Inſomuch that there was ſome *truth* as well as *wit* in Dr. *South*'s remark,

* *Burnet*'s Expoſition, p. 72. † Hiſt. of Reform. Vol. II. p. 169.

That

That by this Expoſition of the Thirty-nine Articles, the Biſhop had given the Church forty ſtripes ſave one. Whether the Right Reverend Author was himſelf perfectly ſatisfied with the principles on which he proceeded, is rather *uncertain:* but it is unqueſtionably *certain*, that he tried the utmoſt force of them for the accommodation of ſome ſcrupulous conſciences. For this idea of a latitude of interpretation, perfectly labours in its operation throughout the whole Expoſition, in order to reconcile men of different ſentiments to a ſubſcription to the Articles. And he brings this Article in particular, now under conſideration, as a ſpecimen of that latitude which the Church intended to allow. I have already given my ſentiments in general upon this point; but think it neceſſary to conſider what has been pleaded in favour of this Article, diſtinctly from the general ground of that preſumption: which is this. That the alteration of the Article, as it now ſtands, from what it was in the Articles of *Edward* the Sixth, was *deſignedly* made to render it *ambiguous*, and to leave every man at liberty to put a different interpretation upon it, if more agreeable to his judgment.

I am indeed no competent judge of the good intentions of the Compilers; but the aſſertion appears to be rather the offspring of groundleſs

conjecture, than the teſtimony of a fact ſupported by authority. Such intentions however, if any ſuch there were, were effectually fruſtrated by expreſſing the Article in the manner they have done; for ſince the word *Hell* had, as I conceive, undoubtedly a determinate ſignification in *common uſe*, and the declaration now binds to a ſubſcription in the plain, literal, grammatical ſenſe; no advantage can be taken, by an honeſt ſubſcriber, of any deſigned ambiguity not *expreſſed* in the terms and phraſeology of the Article. Nor is it eaſy to conceive, it would have been ſaid, upon that ſuppoſition, that He *went down* into *hell*; for this ſeems plainly to mark the diſtinction between the ſtate of the righteous and the wicked. Since of the former it was, at leaſt, much more uſual, if not the conſtant mode of expreſſion at that time, to ſay, that their ſeparate ſpirits *aſcended* to dwell where Jeſus dwells; who told his diſciples, that He *aſcended* unto his God and their God, and to his Father and their Father. If the opinion of Archbiſhop *Uſher* * be admitted, that the *Greek* word κατῆλθεν, tranſlated *deſcended*, ſignifies in ſome paſſages in the *Acts*, not a deſcent from an *higher* to a *lower* place, but a removing ſimply from one place to another; this cannot be ſaid of the *Engliſh* word *deſcended*, or of the phraſe, *He went down*; which always denote ſuch a deſcent, either *ſtrictly* or *figuratively*.

* *Uſher*'s Anſwer to the Jeſuit's Challenge, p. 390.

And though it was the ancient opinion of Heathens, that the common receptacles of departed ſouls were under the earth, or in the heart or bowels thereof; yet Chriſtians were very early taught to uſe a very different language.

But the whole of the ſuppoſition, ſeems to be founded on a miſtaken view of the real fact. The Article of 1552 not only aſſerted that Chriſt went down into *Hell*, but alſo ſpecified the *ends* of his deſcent *——Now the Compilers of the preſent Articles thought proper to leave us at liberty to determine for ourſelves, about the *ends* for which He went down into Hell; (a controverted point among the Chriſtian Fathers, and probably among themſelves,) and retained only the more general aſſertion that *He did go there*, without ſpecifying for what particular purpoſe. They *abridged* the Article it is allowed; but it is no fair inference, that therefore they *altered the ſenſe* of what they *retained*. The more natural and probable concluſion lies the other way. And thus the inquiry turns out in favour of my hypotheſis, inſtead of making any thing againſt it. It may not be improper here to obſerve,

* As Chriſt died and was buried for us, ſo alſo it is to be believed, that He went down into Hell; for the body lay in the ſepulchre until the reſurrection, but his ghoſt, departing from him, was with the ghoſts that were in priſon or in hell, and did preach to the ſame, as the place of St. *Peter* doth teſtifie. Art. 3. A.D. 1552.

that

that a celebrated champion of the Church of *England*, deſcribing the ſtate of eccleſiaſtical affairs under Queen *Elizabeth*, thus expreſſes himſelf: "About the ſame time a review was "made of the thirty-nine Articles, and ſome "little variations made therein, to render the "ſenſe of them more *determinate* and *clear* *." This account does not conſiſt with the ſuppoſition above conſidered.

To proceed to the conſideration of ſome other commentators on the Articles.

Rogers, after producing ſeveral paſſages from Scripture, in proof of the propoſition raiſed from the Article, "That Chriſt went down in-"to Hell"—thus proceeds. "Alſo that Chriſt "went down into Hell, all ſound Chriſtians "both in former days, and now living, do ac-"knowledge; howbeit in the interpretation of "the Article there is not that conſent as were "to be wiſhed: ſome holding, that Chriſt de-"ſcended into Hell as God only, and not man "—ſome as man only, and that, as ſome think, "in body only, as others deem, in ſoul only—"and others as God and man in one perſon." His references are to *Athanaſius*, *Baſil*, *Auguſtin*, and *Suevica*. However, among this variety of

* See Dr. *Nichols*'s Defence of the Church of *England*, Edit. 1715. p. 23.

opi-

opinions as to the manner and ends, his actual deſcent into the place of torment for one purpoſe or another, is generally allowed. And ſo far is he from acknowledging the opinion now more commonly received, to be the doctrine of the Article; that he ranks thoſe who held it, among the Adverſaries to its truth *.

Dr. *Ellis* vindicates the opinion, that the Article now under conſideration refers to Chriſt's real deſcent into *Hell*; which he thinks alſo to be the ſenſe of Scripture. He ſtates four objections to this doctrine, and returns ſuch anſwers to them, as might be expected in defence of ſo abſurd a ſuppoſition. His anſwer to the laſt, that, " It did not *become* Chriſt to honour " thoſe with his preſence, who had been un- " worthy of his favour, and were eternally " damned;" contains the fulleſt account of his own view of this ſubject. " It did, ſays he, " *become* Chriſt, and for the demonſtration of " his juſtice and glory it was fitting, that he " ſhould preſent himſelf a conqueror to infernal " ſpirits; that he might ſtrike terror into De- " vils, and reproach the damned with their " wickedneſs and folly. However it be, let us " believe that Chriſt went down into Hell,

* See *Rogers*'s Faith, Doctrine, and Religion profeſſed and protected in the Realm of *England*, p. 15, 16. Edit. Camb. 1691.

" though we are not plainly and fully ſatisfied " concerning the ſenſe and manner of it *.

In the ſame ſenſe is this Article interpreted by *Ford* †, Chaplain to the late Duke of *Wharton*; in confirmation of which he urges ſeveral paſſages from the Chriſtian Fathers, ſome few texts of Scripture, and Dr. *Ellis*'s ſolution of the objections to this doctrine.

Dr. *Bennet* allows that the " majority of the " Compilers were plainly of an opinion, which " is now generally exploded;" though he would fain perſuade us, " the Church ſo contrived the " Article on purpoſe, as that it might receive " different ſenſes ‡." Of ſuch a contrivance however, no other evidence appears from the Doctor's writings, but his own deſire to make a ſuppoſed *ambiguity* in this Article, a warrant for the ſame latitude in interpreting any of the reſt, as convenience might require.

* Decuit Chriſtum, atque, ad demonſtrationem juſtitiæ & gloriæ ſuæ, æquum fuit, ſe victorem apud inferos exhibere, ut diabolis terrorem incuteret, & damnatis nequitiam & inſipientiam objectaret. Utcunque ſe res habeat, credamus nos Chriſtum ad inferos deſcendiſſe, licet de ſenſu & modo non tam planè & plenè conſtet. Vide *Ellis* Articul. defenſionem. Edit. Amſtel. 1700, p. 14.

† Vide *Ford* in Articulos Chriſtianæ Religionis ſive Eccleſiæ Anglicanæ, p. 14. Edit. Lond. 1720.

‡ *Bennet* ubi ſupra, Chap. 35. p. 441.

The late Dr. *Waterland* once obſerved, that " The ſenſe of the Compilers and Impoſers " where certainly known muſt be religiouſly " obſerved, even though the words were capa- " ble of another ſenſe *." But when this aſſertion was preſſed upon the Doctor in its full and juſt extent, it ſeemed likely to have deprived him of that privilege, which he wiſhed to enjoy himſelf, but denied to others. This obliged him to take ſhelter in his enemies quarters. For he was ſingularly happy in thinking, all the points contained in the Articles *which he believed*, were fully *determined* by the Compilers; and that *juſt as many as he diſbelieved*, were left *undetermined* by them. Upon this principle, when the ſenſe of the Compilers concerning Chriſt's deſcent into *Hell* was urged againſt him, this was his reply, " One thing is certain, " that our Church has left that Article at large, " intending a latitude; and indulging a liberty " to ſubſcribers to abound in their own ſenſe †." Upon which Mr. Archdeacon *B———e* makes the following pertinent aud judicious remarks.

" Here if you leave out the intention of the " *Impoſers* one thing is certain, that no lati- " tude is left to the ſubſcriber of the Article; " the words *Hell* and *Inferi* never ſignifying

* Caſe of Arian Subſcription, p. 11.

† *Waterland* ubi ſupra, p. 35.

" any thing in the days of the Compilers, but " the place of torment. If the intention of " the Impoſers is taken into the account, ano- " ther thing is certain, that no liberty is allow- " ed to ſubſcribers to abound in their own ſenſe, " unleſs having deſerted the ſenſe of the Com- " pilers, they abſolutely neglect the intention " of the Impoſers, which may always be cer- " tainly known *."

A very ſenſible however heterodox Writer, who has lately oppoſed many of the Articles with great freedom, has taken notice of this, among others. He ſays he is " ſometimes " inclined to believe, that the original Com- " poſer had not quite got rid of the Roman " Catholic ideas of a purgatory." So far I believe he is right. But he objects to the interpretation of the word *Hell* in the Article, as referring to the *final* ſtate of puniſhment of the wicked, (which he accounts one proper ſignification of the word,) becauſe he ſuppoſes no ſuch ſtate hath as yet exiſted. The doctrine more generally received of an *intermediate* ſtate of conſcious exiſtence, he ſays, the Church has no where authoritatively aſſerted, and that the Holy Scriptures are quite ſilent about it. The only other ſenſe of the word, beſides that of

* Confeſſional, p. 152. Edit. 1766.

the *final* ſtate of puniſhment, he ſuppoſes to be the *Grave*; and therefore concludes "the pro-"poſition in queſtion, to be a mere fooliſh "unmeaning repetition of the burial of Jeſus "Chriſt: becauſe, ſays he, I had much ra-"ther our Article-makers ſhould be found to "be ridiculous only, than criminally preſump-"tuous *."

This concluſion has ſo much the appearance of an ironical ſatire, that it is hardly neceſſary to ſhew on what a ſandy foundation it is built. Otherwiſe it might be properly ſuggeſted, that the Compilers faith is not to be determined either by the faith, or by the unbelief of this Author. That they did not uſe the word *Hell* to ſignify the ſtate of torment, can never be proved by his ſaying, he does not believe any ſuch ſtate hath as yet exiſted. It is on the contrary certain, that they did believe in the doctrine of an intermediate ſtate. And farther, the Church did once *authoritatively aſſert* that doctrine, in the fortieth of K. *Edward*'s Articles, which is thus expreſſed. "They which ſay "that the ſouls of ſuch as depart hence do ſleep, "being without all ſenſe, feeling, or perceiving "until the day of judgment; or affirm that "the ſouls die with the bodies, and at the laſt "day ſhall be raiſed up with the ſame, do ut-

* See Doctrine of a Trinity, &c. p. 108.

" terly diſſent from the right belief declared " unto us in holy Scripture." Nor do I think we have any juſt reaſon to conclude, that the Church has renounced the *belief* of every thing which was omitted, at the reviſal of the Articles in Q. *Elizabeth*'s reign.

I ſhall cloſe my inquiry into the ſenſe of this Article, by taking the evidence of Biſhop *Beveridge*; a very learned and pious man, and beyond all controverſy, a true Son of the Church. His Lordſhip thus introduces his Comment *. " Though this Article be in itſelf as clear and " certain as any of the reſt, yet men having ex- " erciſed their fancies ſo variouſly upon it, have " drawn, as it were, a veil over it, and ſo eclipſ- " ed the light of it; and hence it is, that ſome " do not righly underſtand it, others ſcruple it, " yea and others, do in plain terms contradict " and gainſay it. That the firſt of theſe may " be taught the truth concerning it, the ſecond " reſolved about it, and the third convinced " of their error in denying it, I ſhall firſt lay " down ſome propoſitions to clear it, and then " proceed to the confirmation of it."

After making many conceſſions, " that the " *Greek* and *Latin* words which we tranſlate, *He* " *deſcended into Hell*, may" *in themſelves* " admit " of another interpretation than what in this

* See Bp. *Beveridge*'s Expoſition, p. 69—86. Edit. 1711, " tranſla-

" tranſlation of them we put upon them;" he enters upon the proof that " the word *Hades*" *as it ſtands in the Creed*, " cannot by any means " admit of any other ſignification than what is " put upon it when it is tranſlated *Hell*." But " however, ſays he, ſuch an interpretation " (i. e. taking the word in a general ſenſe,) may " be *forced* upon this Article as it ſtands in the " Apoſtles Creed; yet we are *ſure* there can be " no ſuch ſenſe put upon it, as it is here deliver- " ed as the doctrine of the *Church of England*." He not only takes the *literal* to be the *true* ſenſe of the *Article*, but alſo the true doctrine of *Scripture*. With all the pomp of literature he fights for this exploded notion. He appeals to *Scripture*, to *Reaſon*, and to *Church authority* for the proof. In reference to the teſtimony from *Scripture*, he obſerves upon the paſſage in St. *Peter*, that the interpretation he contends for, " was ſo generally received in the primitive " Church, that they did not in that ſincere age " ſeek out for any other, but took this to be " the undoubted meaning of the place; ſo " that to name the place to them was a ſuffi- " cient proof of the thing." He aſcribes it to the degeneracy and greater infidelity of the times, that it was not thought ſo by later ages. " I am ſure, ſays he, the ancient " *Syriack*, *Arabick*, and *Æthiopick* tranſlation " ſeem clearly to carry the ſenſe that way."

In ſupport of the ſame doctrine he introduces, and comments on many other paſſages *. From Scripture he proceeds to *Reaſon*, and argues thus. "The ſoul of Chriſt after its ſepa-"ration from the body, and before his reſurrec-"tion from the dead, was either in Heaven or "in Hell; but it was not in Heaven, therefore "it muſt needs have been in Hell. That the "ſoul of Chriſt, when ſeparated from the body, "did not immediately go up to Heaven," he proves thus. Firſt,

"That the Lord Chriſt, both while living, "and when dying, was ſtill accounted as a ſin-"ner."—"And he thus dying as a ſinner, can-"not in reaſon be thought to go whither ſaints, "but whither ſinners go when dead. His body "that was laid where the bodies of ſinners are, "in the grave; and ſo his ſoul, it is fitting, "that ſhould go whither the ſouls of ſinners go, "to Hell."—"The ends to be anſwered by "his deſcent were, (1) That he might undergo "the ſtate and condition of a dead, as well as "of a living ſinner. (2.) That he might give "us ſecurity for our pardon and redemption "from Hell. And (3) his ſoul did princi-"pally go to Hell, and remained there whilſt "his body was in the grave, that ſo it might

* Acts ii. 24. Eph. iv. 9. Rom. x. 6. Pſalm xvi. 10. Acts ii. 31.

"be

" be in a ſtate of humiliation, as well and as " long as his body."

Hence he derives his ſecond reaſon, " Why " we are not to think the Soul of Chriſt went " to Heaven, but to Hell; becauſe, if his " ſoul had aſcended to Heaven, as his body de- " ſcended into the grave, then one part of his " human nature had been exalted, whilſt the " other was debaſed."

A third reaſon he derives from a declaration of our Saviour himſelf, " who beſt knew when " he firſt aſcended up to Heaven, and tells " us plainly, the third day after his death, be- " ing the day of his reſurrection, that he was " not then aſcended up to Heaven, ſaying to " *Mary*, *Touch me not, for I am not yet aſcended* " *to my Father* *."

" Whence, ſays he, we cannot but judge, " that if we weigh things in the equal balance " of unbiaſſed reaſon, we muſt needs believe, " That the ſoul of Chriſt when breathed from " his body upon his croſs on earth, went not " up to his crown in Heaven, but ſtaid in Hell " until the time it was to be united to its body " again."

His Lordſhip then briefly conſiders the objections to this ſenſe, and afterwards proceeds

* John xx. 17.

to

to ſhew, how conſiſtent this interpretation of the Article is, with the judgment of the Ancient Chriſtian writers.

" Neither, ſays he, is this a truth of yeſter-
" day's growth, but almoſt all the Fathers of
" the primitive Church have acknowledged
" and received it as an article of their faith.
" Though they much differ about the end of
" his going, yet that he did go thither they
" all agree. Some ſaid he went to preach there,
" others to looſe ſuch as himſelf thought fit,
" others to triumph over his conquered enemy
" the Devil; but all affirm, that he did go to
" Hell. But paſſing by many others, I ſhall
" only impannel one Jury of them, that bring
" in their verdict for this truth."

" And the Foreman is *Ignatius*. Then fol-
" low *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Tertullian*, *Athana-*
" *ſius*, St. *Hilary*, St. *Ambroſe*, St. *Baſil*, St. *Je-*
" *rome*, *Macarius*, *Fulgentius*, *Anaſtaſius Sinaita*,
" and St. *Auguſtin*."

" Seeing therefore that Scripture is ſo clear
" for it, ſeeing Reaſon alſo ſubſcribeth to it,
" ſeeing ſo little or nothing can be brought
" againſt it, and ſeeing a whole Jury of Fathers,
" beſides others, give their verdict for it, we
" cannot but conclude, *That as Chriſt died for*

" *us*

" *us and was buried, ſo alſo is it to be believed*
" *that He went down into Hell.*"

I ſhall only remark, that, if theſe Jurymen had been now living, and ſummoned to give their opinion, whether this was the ſenſe of the third Article of the Church of *England*, I ſhould have been perfectly ſatisfied with their verdict; for I think this matter is now put beyond all reaſonable doubt. But conſidered as a proof that it is the doctrine of the Bible, I make no ſcruple to add, that Judge and Jury are all in the wrong. To conclude; on this account the moſt orthodox Proteſtant Diſſenter may reaſonably object to ſubſcribing this article. And though ſome of my Brethren * may not dare to indulge any doubts about its *truth*, nor at all to heſitate about its *importance*; I leave doubting and heſitation far behind me here.

ARTICLE IV.

CHRIST did truly riſe again from death; and took again his body, with fleſh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith He aſcended into Heaven, and there ſitteth until He return to judge all men at the laſt day.

* See the Apology for the Renewal of an Application, &c. p. 45.

Ac-

According to the literal ſenſe, and plain grammatical conſtruction of this Article, it ſhould ſeem that our exalted Saviour aſcended into Heaven, and there ſitteth with that body of fleſh and bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, in preciſely the ſame ſtate, in which He reaſſumed his body upon his reſurrection from the dead.

But this literal ſenſe is not conſiſtent with the doctrine of Scripture.

It is indeed admitted that in ſome reſpects, and in a true and proper ſenſe, the glorified body of Chriſt is the ſame in which He tabernacled among men. But whatever it is which conſtitutes the identity, we are ſure it is ſuch a ſameneſs as is conſiſtent with many great and advantageous alterations. The ſameneſs of the human body in the preſent life, is not founded upon an unchangeable permanency in its ſtate, during all the different ſtages of life; but rather upon the ſame invariable relation and union which we have with it, under all the changes ariſing from the perpetual flux in the animal ſyſtem. And we are taught to expect much greater alterations in the bodies we ſhall receive in the morning of the reſurrection—ſuch alterations as are ſuited to the different nature and circumſtances of the future ſtate—and as to true Chriſtians,

Chriſtians, ſuch as ſhall manifeſt that the bodies of the ſaints were a part of the purchaſed poſſeſſion, and ſhall have a ſhare in the benefits of redemption through the blood of Jeſus. The apoſtle *Paul* has given us a beautiful deſcription of this change, and of the conſiſtency of it with the individual ſameneſs of the body laid in the duſt, with that which ſhall be raiſed in the laſt day *. This he illuſtrates by various metaphors, and particularly by that of the ſeed ſown in the ground; which, after being duly macerated, ſprings up out of the earth in a different *form* from the bare grain, but preſerves at the ſame time a conſtant *relation* and *affinity* to its own particular ſpecies. He then draws the analogous contraſt between the body as laid in the grave, and raiſed up in the great day. "It is "ſown in *corruption*, it is raiſed in *incorruption*; "it is ſown in *diſhonour*, it is raiſed in *glory*; it is "ſown in *weakneſs*, it is raiſed in *power*; it is ſown "a *natural* body, it is raiſed a *ſpiritual* body."

With reſpect to ſuch as ſhall not fall aſleep or ſee death, he aſſerts the neceſſity of an equal *change*; laying it down as an unqueſtionable truth, that "fleſh and blood cannot inherit the "kingdom of God; neither, ſays he, doth "corruption inherit incorruption." Wherefore he aſſures the *Corinthians*, that "in a mo-

* 1 Cor. xv. 36 & ſeq.

"ment,

" ment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the " ſound of the laſt trumpet, they ſhall all be " *changed.*"

Now it is obſervable, that while the Apoſtle repreſents the mortality of the body, as the effect of our relation to the firſt *Adam*, and as bearing his *image*; he alſo repreſents this glorious change taking place in a reſurrection from the dead, or by a momentary exertion of divine power, upon thoſe who ſhall be alive at the coming of the Lord, as the effect of a relation to Chriſt the ſecond *Adam*, and as bearing *his image*. In like manner he elſewhere deſcribes true Chriſtians, as looking " for a Saviour, the " Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall *change* our vile " body, that it may be faſhioned like, or be " conformable unto his own glorious body *."

Thus it appears, that Chriſt's glorified body is both the *pledge* and *pattern* of the glorification of the bodies of the ſaints. And ſince we are expreſsly taught to conceive of this alteration in *their* bodies, as preceding the admiſſion of them into Heaven: it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the body of our bleſſed *Saviour* underwent the ſame glorious change in a moment, in the courſe of his aſcenſion, after that He was received up into the clouds out of the ſight of his

* Phil. iii. 21.

diſci-

diſciples; but before He entered on the right hand of the Majeſty on high. Conſequently it cannot be true, neither does it conſiſt with the Apoſtle's aſſertion, that "fleſh and blood can-"not inherit the kingdom of God," to ſay that Chriſt aſcended into Heaven with his *fleſh* and *bones*, and all things appertaining to the perfection (or rather the preſent imperfection) of man's nature. Much leſs can we allow, that He now therewith ſitteth until He ſhall return to judge all men at the laſt day; to which idea the moſt natural conſtruction of the Article would alſo lead us.

A Writer, to whom I have before referred *, imagines it is not only the doctrine of the Church, that our *Saviour*'s body did not undergo a change before his aſcenſion into Heaven; but likewiſe that the bodies of the *Saints* ſhall be preciſely the ſame at the reſurrection, which they were before. The literal ſenſe of the Article (in which we are bound to ſubſcribe it) undoubtly holds forth the firſt of theſe erroneous tenets; but I conceive his authorities are inſufficient to ſupport the latter aſſertion. I would do no wrong to the judgment of the Church, and will be an advocate for her againſt every unjuſt reflection caſt upon her doctrines. The phraſe in the creed, teaching us to believe in the reſurrection

* Vide ſupra, p. 52.

of

of the *body*, does not militate againſt the ſuppoſition of a *change* produced in it; neither does that in the baptiſmal office, which calls it the reſurrection of the *fleſh*, and which he deems an explication of the former. In both theſe places, the *body* and the *fleſh* only ſtand oppoſed to the *ſoul*, and intimate a reſurrection of the *mortal* part, as diſtinguiſhed from that which is *immortal*. That Gentleman might have recollected, that his own private opinion of the ſleep of the ſoul in the grave, and the reſurrection of it in the great day, is not the avowed doctrine of the Church of *England*. But his predilection for that ſentiment, ſeems to have given riſe to an uncandid interpretation of the creed and baptiſmal office.

Bp. *Burnet* was aware of the impropriety in the expreſſion of this Article, and therefore ſpeaks of it as a thing queſtioned, whether the body of Chriſt was changed, or whether it retains ſtill the ſame form in heaven which it had on earth. He inclines to the former opinion as moſt probable and ſcriptural, but not as being the plain literal ſenſe of the Article *.

I have only one obſervation more to make upon this Article, in favour of thoſe who believe in the doctrine of the Millennium, or expect the perſonal reign of Chriſt on the earth. I ſhall

* *Burnet*'s Expoſition, p. 82.

not

not enter into the inquiry whether this is, or is not the doctrine of Scripture. Let it only be remembered, that it is an opinion which has been held by many Calviniſts, as well as by perſons ſuſpected of hereſy on other controverted points. It is certainly a tenet perfectly innocent in itſelf, and pregnant with no injurious conſequences to civil ſociety; and therefore it may juſtly be accounted a hardſhip, that a man ſhould be denied the benefit of a legal toleration on account of believing it. But every honeſt man of this perſuaſion, however cordially he may approve of ſubſcription to human creeds in general, and of all the reſt of the doctrines contained in the thirty-nine Articles, muſt be deprived of that benefit, if he carefully attends to the laſt clauſe of this Article, which aſſerts Chriſt's continuance in Heaven, until He return to judge all men at the laſt day. Whereas the advocates for the Millennium, look for his deſcent from Heaven a thouſand years before the arrival of that important period. I am inclined to think, ſome zealous opponents of relief in the matter of ſubſcription, are conſiderably intereſted in this difficulty.

ARTICLE VI.

———*In the name of the Holy Scripture we do underſtand thoſe canonical books of the Old and New Teſtament, of whoſe authority* was never any doubt in the Church.

This remarkable definition of Holy Scripture brings the Subſcriber into a difficult dilemma. For he muſt either declare he believes this aſſertion to be true, of all the books received as canonical, and inſerted in the liſt affixed to this Article, which was the evident deſign of the Compilers; and ſo offend againſt the cleareſt evidence of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory to the contrary. Or, if he ſtrictly adheres to the Church's definition of Holy Scripture, and conſequently admits no other books to be canonical, than thoſe of whoſe authority was never any doubt in the Church, he cannot conſcientiouſly ſubſcribe to the canonical authority of *all* the books enumerated in the catalogue, which is ſubjoined to the Article; and which it was alſo the evident deſign of the Compilers ſhould be received as ſuch. For it is impoſſible it can be true, that all the books contained in that liſt are to be eſteemed canonical, and yet none but thoſe of which there never was any doubt. For my own part,

part, I both admire and adore the wiſdom of Providence, which hath often over-ruled the doubts of men about the truth of revelation in general, of particular books of Scripture, and of particular doctrines contained in thoſe books, ſo as to become the occaſion of the more effectually eſtabliſhing their divine authority. And although it is undeniable, that the authority of ſeveral of the books of Scripture has been doubted and diſputed; yet the objections to that authority have been ſufficiently and ſolidly anſwered. Not to mention any particular books of the Old Teſtament, the general authority of which is eſtabliſhed by the New; it is well known, the epiſtle to the *Hebrews* (that moſt excellent and evangelical comment upon the Levitical prieſthood) was early called in queſtion, as were alſo the epiſtle of St. *James*, the 2d of St. *Peter*, the 2d and 3d of St. *John*, that of St. *Jude*, and the *Revelation*. Hence the diſtinction of the books of the New Teſtament by ancient eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians, into ὁμολογουμενοι and ἀντιλεγομενοι; the former denoting ſuch as had been univerſally received; and the latter thoſe, the authority of which had been diſputed; though they were at length introduced into the canon, after the moſt careful examination of their genuineneſs, and upon the moſt ſatisfactory evidence of their divine original. But if we allow the definition of Holy Scripture

given in this Article, to be a juſt and accurate one; we muſt yet conclude they are not canonical, and were not written under the ſame divine inſpiration with the reſt. Biſhop *Burnet* had ſurely forgotten his Logick, when he urged as a diſtinct particular in his proof, that all the books of the New Teſtament now received are canonical, according to the Church's definition of canonical authority; "That ſome queſtion "was made touching ſome of them, becauſe "there was not that clear or general knowledge "concerning them, that there was concerning "the others; yet upon fuller inquiry all ac- "quieſced in them †." As if a ſatisfaction reſulting from a fuller inquiry, occaſioned by *previous doubts*, proved that no ſuch doubts ever *exiſted*. Biſhop *Beveridge* has kept this difficulty out of ſight, by expounding the Article as it was framed 1552; for the clauſe I have conſidered, was firſt inſerted in 1562, at the time of the reviſal of the Articles.

It is remarkable, that the canonical Books are named and numbered in this Article, according to the diviſion of the *Vulgate* Bible; which includes the Book of *Lamentations* in the Prophecy of *Jeremiah*, and calls the Books of *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah*, the 1ſt and 2d of *Eſdras*. The abſurdity of ſuffering the Liſt to continue in this form, when another diviſion of the Bible

† *Burnet*, ubi ſupra, p. 99.

came into common uſe, muſt be obvious to every Reader.—But it was *eſtabliſhed*; and alterations in eſtabliſhments are dangerous. It is hardly to be doubted however, that in conſequence of this unaltered Eſtabliſhment, many perſons have ignorantly ſubſcribed to the canonical authority of two *Apocryphal Books*—the only Books which now paſs under the title of the 1ſt and 2d of *Eſdras*.

ARTICLE VIII.

THE three Creeds, Nice *Creed*, Athanaſius's *Creed, and that which is commonly called the* Apoſtles *Creed*, ought thoroughly to be received and believed; for they may be proved by moſt certain warrants of Scripture.

Now with ſubmiſſion to the judgment of the Church, I conceive there is no neceſſity that any one of them ſhould be *thoroughly* received and believed——that it is impoſſible that they can all be ſo received by the ſame perſon——and that the Creed of *Athanaſius* with its damnatory clauſe, ought to be rejected by every believer in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Nor is it any great offence againſt the Church to ſay ſo, if we conſider the latter clauſe of the Article. She therein confeſſes, that the reaſon why they ſhould be ſo received, is, becauſe they may be

proved by moſt certain warrants of Scripture. Now if the reaſon urged for injoining ſuch belief cannot be ſupported, ſhe ought upon her own principles, to renounce this claim upon the conſciences of Chriſtians.

What has already been alleged in the preceding review of the third Article, is ſufficient to ſhew why I think that the creed commonly, but falſely called the Apoſtles, need not and ought not to be *thoroughly* received. Many writers, and among them ſome Dignitaries of the Church of *England*, have agreed with Diſſenters in believing, that Chriſt's real deſcent into Hell, cannot be proved by any certain warrant of Scripture.

In the beginning of the fourth century, A.D. 325. *Conſtantine* the *Great* ſummoned a general council to meet at *Nice*, a city in *Bithynia*, to ſettle the diſputes about the proper time for the obſervation of *Eaſter*, and to prevent the propagation of the principles of *Arius*. At this council three hundred and eighteen Biſhops and Preſbyters aſſembled, who at length agreed upon a certain explication of the doctrine of the Trinity, called from the place of their meeting, the *Nicene* Creed. This was afterwards conſiderably enlarged, as it now ſtands, by the council of *Conſtantinople*. Some

of the more wiſe and moderate members of the council of *Nice* perceived the great difficulty likely to ariſe, from the multitude of queſtions which were ſtarted in the debate, and the variety of judgments concerning the moſt proper phraſes to be adopted, in explaining ſo ſublime a doctrine. They therefore gave it as their opinion, "that no innovation ſhould be made in matters "of Faith; but that it ſhould be ſtill entertained "with the ſame naked ſimplicity, wherewith "from the beginning it had been delivered to "the Church; men of ſimple and honeſt minds, "ſays Dr. *Cave* *, not thinking it fit, that arti-"cles concerning God ſhould be made the ſub-"ject of ſubtle, and over-curious diſputes." But this prudent advice was over-ruled by ſome other members of the Council, and principally through the influence of *Athanaſius*, whoſe own private ends (cloaked under the ſpecious diſguiſe of a zeal for the truth) would have been effectually fruſtrated, if the ſcriptural phraſes had been determined to be preferable to the words of mens invention. By whom the Creed was drawn up may perhaps admit of diſpute; but ſome writers have aſcribed it without the leaſt heſitation to *Hoſius* Biſhop of *Corduba*, and I ſhall not call in queſtion his title to this honour. It may however be juſtly queſtioned, whether this Creed

* *Cave*'s Acts and Proceedings of the Council of *Nice*, in his Life of *Athanaſius*, § 3.

may not with more propriety be ſubſcribed by *Arians*, than by ſuch as are now called *Athanaſians*. The phraſe made uſe of in the deſcription of the divinity of our Lord, has been thought by ſome Trinitarians, to be totally inconſiſtent with the idea of his true and proper Deity. It profeſſes a belief in Him as Θεὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ, God of God, one God derived from, and dependent upon another God for his exiſtence.——The phraſe is not uſed in reſpect to any ſubordination of office, but in reference to his Being and divine nature. But ſince one of the firſt ideas of the Deity, is, that of an *unoriginated*, *uncauſed*, *ſelf-exiſtent*, and *independent* Being; many advocates for the Deity of our Lord, are of opinion, that if the unity of the Godhead be maintained, there can be no ſuch thing as a very God of very God. And that to ſpeak of a God by *derivation*, is confeſſedly denying that ſelf-exiſtence to the Son, which is one of the diſtinguiſhing attributes of ſupreme Deity *. If I was an *Arian* in judgment, I ſhould

* A learned Advocate for the *Nicene* faith, repreſents it as the opinion of that council, and as the unanimous judgment of the *Ante* and *Poſt Nicene* Fathers, that the Son was not ὑπὸ τὸν πατέρα But on the contrary, that they held the ſubordination of the Son to the Father, *ut ad ſui originem ac principium*—that the Son did not poſſeſs the divine nature and perfections of the Father *collateraliter*, *aut coordinatè*, *ſed ſubordinatè*——that the Father was *fons*, *origo*, *ac principium*,

I ſhould have no objection to the phraſeology of this Creed. It is therefore to me no wonder, that the followers of *Arius* ſo readily ſubſcribed it. The only objection which they had at firſt to that ſubſcription, aroſe from the uſe of the word *conſubſtantial*, which they thought unſcriptural, and ſeemed to convey to their minds the idea of corporeal affections, "as if the Son "did ſubſiſt of his Father by ſome kind of

pium, divinitatis quæ in Filio eſt—that He alone was ἀναρχος—that He was to the Son αἴτιον τοῦ εἶναι, the cauſe of his exiſtence.——That it was cuſtomary with them to call the Father διαφορικῶς, ſometimes "God abſolutely," ſometimes "That one God," and at other times, "The "God and Father of all;" becauſe the Father only was God of Himſelf, the Son God of God.—Hence, they ſaid, the Son was only called God, in the ſame manner as a Ray, conſidered *apart* from the Sun, is called the Sun. The Biſhop ſeemed apprehenſive of ſome inconſiſtency between ſeveral of theſe expreſſions, and the doctrine of the Coeternity of the Son, which he had before laboured to prove was the doctrine of the *Nicene* Council. But he was relieved from his difficulty by ſome curious extracts from the Fathers, the purport of which is to prove, that the Son's having a beginning, is very conſiſtent with his having no beginning. —One of them ſays, τὸ μὲν ἀναρχον καὶ αἴδιον τὸ δὲ ἀΐδιον οὐ πάντως ἀναρχον. And who, upon the principles of Scripture or common ſenſe, ſhall dare to diſpute the authority of *Gregory Nazianzen?* Vide *Bulli* Defenſionem Fidei Nicenæ, Sect. 4. Cap. 1. Edit. Oxon. 1685.

From the paſſages above quoted, it is fully evident, that thoſe who believe Self-exiſtence to be an eſſential attribute of Deity, cannot imagine *true* Deity to be aſcribed to our Bleſſed Lord in the *Nicene* Creed.

"ſection

" ſection or diviſion; whereas they thought it " impoſſible that an immaterial, intellectual, " and incorporeal nature ſhould admit any cor- " poreal paſſion. But they thought it very juſt " and reaſonable to aſſent to it, when the epi- " thet was explained to ſignify no more, than " that the Son of God had no kind of ſimilitude " with any creatures, but was only, and in all " things like unto this Father that begat Him, " nor of any other ſubſiſtence or eſſence, but " of the Father *." When the Emperor's reſentment againſt *Arius*, was moderated by the interceſſion of ſome of his friends, he was recalled from his baniſhment into *Illyricum*, upon condition of his ſubſcription to the Faith eſtabliſhed in the *Nicene* Council. The Emperor's Letter to him upon this occaſion, was both very reſpectful and very affectionate. *Arius* complied with the invitation to court, and preſented to the Emperor a confeſſion of his faith, in the name of himſelf, and his fellow-ſufferer *Euzoius*, in which he declares—" We believe in one God " the Father Almighty, and in our Lord Jeſus " Chriſt his Son, begotten of Him before all " ages, being God the Word, by whom all things

* See *Euſebius*'s (Biſhop of *Cæſarea*) Letter to the people of *Cæſarea*; written to convince thoſe who inclined to *Arius*'s principles, that nothing had been determined by the Council contrary to them; and that he had not betrayed their cauſe by ſubſcribing the *Nicene* Creed.

" were

" were made both in Heaven and Earth *." The Emperor was perfectly ſatisfied; but *Athanaſius* was irreconcileable to the reſtoration of *Arius*. The reaſon of his inflexible oppoſition, ſprang, I fear, from the ambition of obtaining the Biſhoprick of *Alexandria*, rather than from a diſintereſted zeal for the truth. When the Emperor found his mediation with *Athanaſius* proved unſucceſsful, he referred *Arius*'s confeſſion of Faith, to the judgment of the Synod at *Jeruſalem*. They decreed that *Arius* and his adherents ſhould be received into communion; and perſuaded the Church of *Alexandria* kindly to entertain them, whoſe Faith the Emperor had pronounced to be *ſound* and *orthodox*. As to the charge of hypocriſy upon *Arius*, it does not appear to be well ſupported by any authentick teſtimony; and it is to be preſumed, that he would have acted a very different part, if he had been addicted to the arts of diſſimulation. But it is too common among mankind, to ſuppoſe *every thing* that is bad, of a man that is branded with hereſy.

It may indeed ſeem ſtrange, that a Creed profeſſedly drawn up with a view of preventing the propagation of Arianiſm, ſhould be expreſſed in ſuch terms, that Arians could conſcientiouſly ſubſcribe it. But it ſhould be re-

* Socrat. I. 26. Soz. II. 27.

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membered, not only that the Creed itſelf abundantly juſtifies their ſubſcription; but alſo that the members of the Council, appear to have been totally unqualified by their heats and animoſities, for attending to the propriety of their expreſſions. Their attention was wholly diverted from the point in diſpute, by the bitterneſs and warmth of perſonal altercations. I can aſſure the reader, there is nothing *uncalviniſtical* in this aſſertion, for *Calvin* himſelf has expreſſed the ſame ſentiment in the ſtrongeſt terms; and drawn a picture of the Council, which better anſwers the deſcription of a lawleſs mob of brutal Ruffians, than of an aſſembly of Chriſtian Divines. He ſpeaks of their conduct as almoſt warranting the ſuppoſition, that it was *ordained* for the gratification of *Arius*, by their giving way to his opinions *.

In

* He reckons up four cauſes or occaſions of the errors and miſtakes of the pureſt Councils; and illuſtrates the influence of the laſt, by the conduct of the Council of *Nice*, in the following words.

Vel quòd nimio affectu nonnunquam præcipites férebantur. Hujus poſtremi (quod omnium duriſſimum videtur) exemplum illuſtre extitit in Nicena Synodo: cujus dignitas omnium conſenſu ſumma veneratione, ut merebatur, excepta eſt. Nam quum primarium fidei noſtræ caput illic periclitaretur, adeſſit hoſtis Arrius in procinctu, quo cum manus conſerendæ eſſent, ſummum verò momentum in eorum concordia eſſet qui ad oppugnandum Arrii errorem paraté venerant: ipſi nihilominus tantorum diſcri-

In farther proof of the *heterodoxy* of the Nicene Creed, I cannot but remark, that all the orthodox writers of the Church of *England*, with Dr. *Waterland* at their Head, have not ſcrupled to cenſure the late celebrated Dr. *Clarke* of St. *James*'s as an Arian, and heterodox member of the Church of *England*. And yet his ſcheme is perfectly conſonant with the Nicene Creed, and founded on the idea therein delivered of the derivation and dependance of the Son. When therefore recourſe was had to Church authority, the Doctor found a ſecure and inpregnable retreat in the judgment of the Nicene Fathers. Nor can I ſee why a clergyman who believed in the Nicene Creed, and rejected the

diſcriminum ſecuri, imò velut *gravitatis, modeſtiæ, & omnis humanitatis obliti, omiſſo quod in manibus erat certamine (quaſi ex deſtinato, Arrio gratificaturi, eo conceſſiſſent) inteſtinis diſſidiis ſeſe proſcindere cæperunt: & ſtylum qui in Arrium ſtringendus erat, in ſeipſos dirigere.* Fædæ criminationes audiebantur: libelli accuſatorii volitabant: nec contentionum finis ullus factus eſſet, donec *mutuis vulneribus ſe confodiſſent*, niſi Imperator Conſtantinus occurriſſet, qui inquiſitionem in eorum vitam, rem eſſe ſupra ſuam cognitionem profeſſus, talem intemperiem laude magis quàm objurgatione caſtigavit. Quàm multis partibus & alia quæ deinde ſequuta ſunt Concilia lapſa fuiſſe veriſimile eſt? Nec longâ demonſtratione opus hæc res habet: ſiquis enim acta perlegat, multas illic infirmitates animadvertet: nequid dicam gravius. *Calvin.* Inſtit. Lib. iv. Cap. ix. § 10. Edit. Lug. Bat. 1654.

Atha-

Athanaſian, had not as much reaſon to conſider himſelf as a true Son of the Church; as another who believed in the Athanaſian, and rejected the Nicene Creed; ſeeing the Church of *England* injoins the belief of the one, as well as of the other. Indeed of the two the former has the better claim, if the calculation of an anonymous writer may be depended on, who aſſerts, that "there are one hundred and eighty "ſix places in the Liturgy, where the phraſes "favour the Nicene doctrine; and but twenty "ſeven places where they lean to the doc-"trine of the Athanaſian Creed *."

A learned foreigner is of the ſame mind with myſelf. "Dr. *Clarke*'s doctrine, ſays he, ſeems "to be the ſame with that of the Nicene Coun-"cil, excepting that he uſes not the word *con-"ſubſtantial.* It is not therefore to be wondered, "that he ſhould have produced ſo many paſ-"ſages from the ancient Fathers in favour of "his hypotheſis. They who pretend that the "Nicene Council ſhould be the rule of our "Faith, ought by no means to cenſure Dr. "*Clarke*, if they underſtand what that Coun-"cil meant †."

* Impartial account of the Riſe both of Arianiſm and Athanaſianiſm, P. 56. Note.

† *Le Clerc.* Bibl. Chois. xxvi. 419.

I ſhall

I ſhall now enter on the conſideration of the Athanaſian Creed, which this Article alſo requires us *thoroughly* to receive and believe. This Creed has been held equally ſacred with the Scriptures, partly from its ſuppoſed high antiquity, partly on account of the name of its reputed Author; but principally on account of its incomprehenſible darkneſs, and the danger of incurrring the penalty of eternal damnation, by entertaining any doubts about it. So that the moſt zealous Trinitarian, who would rather take his Bible than this Creed for an infallible guide, had need to deprecate the reſentments of angry Bigots, infatuated with a ſuperſtitious attachment to Church authority. But notwithſtanding the pretenſions of its former Advocates for a very high antiquity, the learned criticiſms of ſucceeding writers have detected the forgery, fully proved it to be of a much later date, and not improbably the compoſition of the *Orthodox* Church of *Rome*, many (if not ſome hundred) years after the death of *Athanaſius*. Though it ſtill continues to bear his name, and is yet impoſed upon the Church as the Creed of *Athanaſius*; Cardinal *Bona*, Dr. *Comber*, and Biſhop *Beveridge*, are the only writers of any note who can be called modern, that have ventured to aſcribe it to him. Even Dr. *Waterland*, who contended for every tittle of it as if it was divine, was forced to give up this point, and aſcribed

cribed it to *Hilary* of *Arles*. Nor did he attempt to carry its date any farther back, than the beginning of the fifth century*. It would be a fruitleſs inquiry to examine how far there is any certainty as to the Author. Our buſineſs is with the Creed itſelf, rather than its Compiler. But it is ſufficiently clear that *Athanaſius* was not. The impoſition of his name upon it, was probably one of the pious frauds of the Church of *Rome*, in order to ſecure the greater credit and reputation to it in the world. And ſince it is a fact that by bearing his name, and being conſidered at leaſt as conformable to the views he had of the doctrine of the Trinity, it has been held in much the greater veneration; I think this a proper place for the inquiry, how far his opinion ought to have prejudiced our minds in its favour. He has been uſually honoured as an Apoſtle, and ſtyled a Saint. But it is a ſcruple of conſcience with me to call a man ſo, who appears to have been only deſerving of ſuch an appellation, in the Roman Calendar. How well founded this opinion is, I ſhall ſubmit to the determination of the impartial reader, when he has peruſed the character of *Athanaſius*, as drawn by a learned Prelate—a character too well ſupported by the hiſtory of

* See *Waterland*'s Critical Hiſtory of the Athanaſian Creed Chap. 7, 8.

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the times, to admit any ſuſpicion of injuſtice done to the memory of the reputed Saint *.

To

* The character is thus introduced, in a ſpeech before a great Aſſembly on the ſubject of the Athanaſian Creed.

" But then it may probably be aſked, How comes it to " bear the name of *Athanaſius?* The anſwer to which is, " becauſe it agrees perfectly with the Athanaſian doctrine; " and had the name of *Athanaſius* affixed to it by the Church " of *Rome*, becauſe he was a perſon much eſteemed by that " Church, and whoſe principles, as well political as reli- " gious, the members of that Church have long laboured " to propagate among mankind: But, as the true character " of this *Athanaſius* is not commonly known; and there- " fore ſome of your Lordſhips may poſſibly be unacquainted " with it, I ſhall beg leave to inform you who, and what " he was.

" *Athanaſius* was a young, forward, petulant Deacon in " the Church of *Alexandria*, of an ambitious ſpirit, with " a talent fitted for diſputation: and as he could have no " hopes of getting into that Biſhoprick, unleſs he could " drive *Arius* out of *Alexandria*, who was the principal " Preſbyter in that Church next to the Biſhop; this he " effected, by fomenting this diſpute about the Trinity, " between *Arius* and the Biſhop; on which account, hav- " ing got *Arius* excommunicated, he had him then baniſhed " out of *Alexandria:* Which when done, no ſooner was the " old Biſhop *Alexander* dead, but *Athanaſius*, though then " only a young man, of about 27 or 28 years of age, by " the aſſiſtance of a ſet of murdering *Aſcetics*, forced himſelf " at once into that high Archbiſhoprick, without ever paſſing " through any of the intermediate degrees: And having " gotten himſelf illegally conſecrated, contrary to all the " rules and canons of the Church, he prevailed on the " Emperor *Conſtantine* to confirm him therein, by the " power of bribes, that were given to one of the Emperor's

To return to the Creed itſelf. There is one remarkable preſumptive proof that *Athanaſius* was

" favourites: and no ſooner was he thoroughly eſtabliſhed " in it, but he immediately flew in the Emperor's face. " And when the Emperor *Conſtantine* the *Great* was dead, " treated his ſon and ſucceſſor *Conſtantius*, with more con- " tempt and inſolence than could have been borne from an " equal. And when he was diſpoſſeſſed of his Biſhoprick " for other irregularities, by a numerous Council of Bi- " ſhops, regularly ſummoned and aſſembled, he forced his " way into that See again, more than once or twice, over " the murdered corpſes of his antagoniſts; and waded into " his Cathedral through ſeas of blood.

" But it may perhaps be farther aſked, Why ſhould this " recommend him to the See of *Rome?* The reaſon of " which is, becauſe this was all done by the connivance, " and with the concurrence of that See: *Athanaſius*, while " he treated all the reſt of mankind, and even his own " Royal Maſter, with the utmoſt inſolence, having paid a " ſervile court to the Papal Chair. Inſomuch that in the " books of the Canon Law, the firſt precedent that is, or " can be produced in ſupport of the Papal Supremacy, is " this inſtance of the ſervile ſubjection that was paid by " *Athanaſius* to Pope *Julius*. And therefore, I ſhould ap- " prehend, that all Proteſtants, who have renounced the " ſupremacy of the Pope, and the independency of the " Church upon the State, ought to be for obliterating the " name of *Athanaſius* out of their Liturgy, into which it " was probably inſerted, only with a view of recommend- " ing his political principles, under the ſhelter and in- " fluence of his religious doctrines." Biſhop of *Clogher's* Speech made in the Houſe of Lords in *Ireland*, *Feb.* 2, 1756.

The irregularities for which *Athanaſius* was depoſed, and to which this learned Prelate alludes, were not of a trivial nature.

was not the author of it, which the writers in defence of the Creed and the Article have not thought proper to mention, though it has been ſuggeſted by others *. This is derived from the conſideration, that *Athanaſius* was a member of the council of *Nice*, and from the inconſiſtency of the language of the Athanaſian Creed, with the expreſſions made uſe of both in the Nicene Creed, and by *Athanaſius* himſelf in ſome of his known and acknowledged writings. The Nicene Creed cloſes with pronouncing the anathema of the Catholick and Apoſtolick Church, upon ſuch as ſhould hold certain errors reſpecting the perſon of Chriſt; and among others, upon "ſuch as ſhould ſay

nature. For among other charges brought againſt him, he was accuſed of *raviſhing a profeſſed Virgin*—of ſending *Pluſianus*, a Biſhop of his party, to fire the houſe of *Arſenius*, a Biſhop of the *Meletian* party; and of tying him to a poſt, and whipping him, and then caſting him into priſon. And though he demurred at firſt to the competency of his Judges, and afterwards finding his demur was not admitted, denied the ſeveral charges; yet when he perceived that the Council were reſolved to delegate ſome of their number, to inquire into the true ſtate of the caſe, he thought it beſt to take his flight, to avoid confronting the evidence which he knew they could procure; and upon the authority of which, after the return of the Delegates from *Egypt*, they paſſed ſentence againſt him.

* See particularly Biſhop *Clayton*'s Eſſay on Spirit, § 133, 141, 142. p. 135 & ſeq.

" that He was of another *Hypoſtaſis* OR *Uſia* *;" plainly uſing theſe words as equivalent in their ſenſe. And *Athanaſius* in a treatiſe on the Synods of *Ariminum* and *Seleucia* poſitively aſſerts, that " the *Hypoſtaſis* is the ſame with the *Uſia*, and " has no other ſignification †." But if we examine the language of the Athanaſian Creed, we ſhall find the orthodox Faith deſcribed by " neither confounding the *Hypoſtaſes*, nor di- " viding the *Uſia*. For there is *one Hypoſtaſis* of " the Father, *another* of the Son, and *another* " of the Holy Ghoſt ‡." And the damnatory clauſe declares this to be " that orthodox Faith, " which except a man keep undefiled, he can- " not poſſibly be ſaved." Now this is alſo an additional objection againſt ſubſcribing the Article. For ſince there is not an axiom in *Euclid*

* Nicene Creed.

Ἡ ἐξ ΕΤΕΡΑΣ ὑποστάσεως Ἢ οὐσίας φάσκοντας εἶναι——τότε ἀναθεματίζει καθολικὴ ἡ ἁγία καὶ ἀποστολικὴ ἐκκλησία. Socrat. Eccleſ. Hiſt. Lib. 1. Cap. 5.

‡ Athanaſian Creed.

Μήτε συγχέοντες τὰς ὑποστάσεις, μήτε τὴν οὐσίαν διαιροῦντες. ΑΛΛΗ ὑποστάσις τοῦ πατρός, ΑΛΛΗ τοῦ υἱοῦ, ΑΛΛΗ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος——Αὕτη τοίνυν ἐστὶν ἡ ὀρθόδοξος πίστις, ἣν ὁ μὴ πιστεύσας ἀμώμητον, σωθῆναι οὐ δύναται. Differt. de tribus Symbolis ad finem *Uſſerii* Annal. Genevæ 1722.

† Ἡ δὲ ὑπόστασις οὐσία ὅτι καὶ ἐστὶν ἄλλο σημαινόμενον ἔχει. Athanaſii Opera, Tom. I. p. 934.

more ſelf-evident than this, that two explanations of one doctrine, ſo directly contrary the one to the other, cannot both be true; no man can believe the Creed of the Council of *Nice*, and that which bears the name of *Athanaſius*, to be both agreeable to the Scriptures. It would, in my judgment, be a very indecent reflection upon Revelation, to ſuppoſe that expreſs contradictions can be proved by "moſt "certain warrants of Scripture."

Thus taking the plain literal ſenſe of the two Creeds and the Article, an ignorant and honeſt ſubſcriber is brought into a very critical and dangerous ſituation. By the Nicene Creed he is ſentenced to everlaſting damnation, if he believes the doctrine of the Athanaſian Creed—by the Athanaſian Creed he is anathematized, if he believes the doctrine of the Nicene Creed —to render his damnation inevitable he is required by the Church of *England* to believe them *both*, upon pain of being devoted to the Devil, for his rejection of *either*—and by ſubſcribing *ex animo* to the truth of the Article, he ſets his own *Amen* to the complicated curſe. So that let him believe what he will upon this point, it may truly be ſaid, if he is ſaved at all, it muſt be ſo as by fire.

The origin of this remarkable contradiction in the phraſeology of the two Creeds, is to be

ſought in the diſputes which firſt aroſe among the Conſubſtantialiſts, in the cloſe of the fourth century, upon this queſtion; Whether there were three *Hypoſtaſes* or but one *Hypoſtaſis* in the Trinity?

Each opinion had its patrons; and each party was well diſpoſed to anathematize the other. And though it has been ſaid that the diſpute was merely verbal, and that they were reconciled, as ſoon as they underſtood one another, this conſideration will not remove the difficulty in the preſent caſe. I feel no reluctance in granting, that they did not underſtand one another; for it does not appear that they underſtood themſelves. Ideas and words, eſpecially in metaphyſical controverſies, do not always go together. They had fixed upon a phraſe to be the Shibboleth of a party, but probably left it to others to find out the diſtinct idea it expreſſed. But thus much is certain; that the latter Creed was framed with a reſpect to a ſuppoſed difference—that it was deſigned to hold forth that difference—and cannot therefore be *thoroughly* received and believed, without becoming a partizan in that diſpute, on the ſide of the Compilers. If a reconciliation between the Diſputants afterwards took place, the Church ſhould not have perpetuated the memorial of their verbal ſtrife, and have kept up that difference and contradiction of expreſſion, which the original parties

had dropped. Beſides, the *literal* ſenſe of *Hypoſtaſis* and *Uſia* as applied to the ſame ſubject, will always be the ſame.

Though the damnatory clauſe of the Nicene Creed is not continued in uſe, in the publick ſervice of the Church; ſhe has thought proper to retain that which is annexed to the Athanaſian Creed, of which I muſt take ſome farther notice.

To prevent any groundleſs ſuſpicions, I think it proper here to premiſe, that upon the authority of divine revelation, I moſt firmly believe the true and proper Deity of the Son and Spirit, as eſſentially partakers of the Divine nature. The doctrine of the Trinity, I receive as the doctrine of Scripture. It appears to me to be clearly taught in the Bible; but the mode of this incomprehenſible union and relation, is no where that I can find, the ſubject of Divine revelation. And probably the limited extent of human comprehenſion in the preſent ſtate, might be the reaſon why it is not revealed. But there is ſurely a wide difference between believing upon the authority of the word of God, that the Son and the Holy Ghoſt are together with the Father the one only living and true Jehovah; and crediting upon no other evidence, than the threatened penalty of damnation by a

mere fellow mortal, any human explanation of the mode of their diſtinct ſubſiſtence in the Godhead. As all our inquiries into the Divine Eſſence muſt neceſſarily be clogged with many difficulties, in attempting explications of this kind, the beſt of men have but darkened counſel by words without knowledge. One ſhould imagine however that no man would ſcruple to grant, that an explanation ought to be intelligible. An unintelligible explication is a perfect ſoleciſm. But he that can underſtand the Athanaſian explication, poſſeſſes a degree of ſagacity which I deſpair of ever attaining, unleſs Mr. *Rotheram* could transfer to me his amazing powers of penetration *. But I ſhould be extremely ſorry to be convinced, that ſuch an incapacity or weakneſs of intellect is a *damnable ſin* An anxious ſolicitude for my own ſalvation, naturally ſuggeſts the queſtion, Who ever gave the Compiler of this Creed authority to ſay ſo? Yet according to him every man who does not perfectly believe in it, muſt without doubt periſh everlaſtingly.

* See ROTHERHAM's *Apology for the Athanaſian Creed*, who has repreſented it as a perfect model of the moſt cloſe, concluſive, and perſpicuous reaſoning. But the injudicious extravagance of this Gentleman's encomiums upon it, is very clearly demonſtrated by the ingenious Author of an anonymous pamphlet, intitled, *An Anſwer to Dr.* ROTHERHAM's *Apology for the Athanaſian Creed; in a Letter to a Friend.* So much I think muſt be allowed by thoſe, who do not approve the Author's own particular view of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Some

Some perſons * would juſtify this uncharitable cenſure, as being no more than a plain paraphraſe on the words of Scripture; delivered by One, whoſe authority I am no more inclined to diſpute, than the warmeſt Advocates for this Creed. But it is aſtoniſhing that any intelligent writer, ſhould not diſcern the manifeſt difference between our Bleſſed Lord's denouncing everlaſting condemnation, upon thoſe who believe not in him, notwithſtanding the miraculous evidence he produced of his divine miſſion; and a ſimilar ſentence being paſſed upon ſuch, as only diſapprove a metaphyſical explication of a ſublime doctrine of Chriſtianity, by a fallible Man, who neither did nor could produce any evidence of his divine inſpiration. Others have endeavoured to abate the force of the damnatory clauſe, by applying it to the doctrine in general, rather than to the particular explanation contained in the Creed. But the Compiler has taken ſufficient pains to prevent ſuch a conſtruction. The introduction, connection, repetition, and phraſeology of the clauſe, abundantly

* See SEED's Sermons, Vol. III. Ser. 5. And alſo *A practical and explanatory Commentary on the Liturgy of the Church of England*, p. 215. written by my learned and honoured Friend PETER WALDO, Eſq;—a Book, which however exceptionable in ſome paſſages to a *Diſſenter*, is nevertheleſs excellently adapted to promote a ſpirit of true practical devotion, in the Members of the Church of *England*.

confirm

confirm this aſſertion. The Compiler begins with ſaying, " Whoſoever will be ſaved, before " all things it is neceſſary, that he hold the " Catholick Faith: Which Faith, except every " one do keep whole and undefiled, without " doubt he ſhall periſh everlaſtingly. And the " Catholick Faith is this." He then proceeds to a part of the explanation, delivered in terms ſuperintelligible to many, and in ſome inſtances, I conceive equally inconſiſtent with itſelf, and with the language in common uſe and eſteem among Athanaſians. Then apparently apprehenſive that the reader's Faith would fail before he got to the end, the Compiler quickens his belief, by a repetition of the Sentence of damnation in the body of the Creed; wherein he expreſſes himſelf in terms, which do immediately reſpect the preceding explanations. " He there- " fore that will be ſaved, muſt *thus* think of " the Trinity." And leſt this ſhould not be ſufficient to ſuppreſs all doubts, the Creed cloſes with the ſame peremptory deciſion, and poſitive denunciation. " This is the Catholick Faith, " which except a man believe faithfully he can- " not be ſaved." Biſhop *Burnet* acknowledges, that theſe clauſes muſt be referred not merely to the doctrine of the Trinity, but to the explication given in the Creed *. And all which the learned Prelate offers by way of ſeeming apology, rather

* *Burnet*'s Expoſition, p. 133-4.

than

than in ſtrict vindication of its ſeverity, moſt evidently tends to eſtabliſh, what at the ſame time he ſeems heartily to wiſh, he could have overthrown.

Biſhop *Beveridge* ſtyles the Athanaſian, an *incomparable* Creed *; and I do moſt cordially ſubſcribe to the truth of the aſſertion. For of all the monuments in human nature of preſumption, arrogance, and conceit, which the hiſtory of paſt ages has left on record, I know of none which may be fitly *compared* to this. If I give a momentary credit to the juſtice of this dreadful ſentence, what numerous infernal ſpectres preſent themſelves to my imagination—the departed ghoſts of illuſtrious men, of whom I have been wont to conceive as fallen aſleep in Jeſus, and joined to the ſpirits of the juſt made perfect above! Shall I mention many diſtinguiſhed Worthies in the Eſtabliſhed Church? Or recall to the remembrance of Proteſtant Diſſenters, the more familiar names of *Owen*, *Baxter*, *Howe*, *Ridgley*, *Watts*, *Doddridge*, *Jennings*, &c. ſome of whom wrote in defence of the doctrine of the Trinity, but upon different views from thoſe given in this celebrated Creed; and the reſt it is well known, highly diſapproved it? But let me ſeek relief from this horrid imagination, in that memorable maxim of the Jewiſh Sage, "As the

* *Beveridge*'s Expoſition, p. 163.

"bird

" bird by wandering, as the ſwallow by flying,
" ſo the curſe cauſeleſs ſhall not come *."

It may probably be objected by ſome, that whatever was the ſenſe of the Compiler, they *ſubſcribed* the damnatory clauſe, only ſo far as it is intended to declare a belief in the Trinity, and the importance of that Doctrine. But give me leave to ſuggeſt, that this is departing from the principle on which we ſet out. This is not to ſubſcribe in the *plain*, *full*, *literal*, *grammatical* ſenſe. This is not *thoroughly* to receive and believe it. Beſides, it muſt be allowed that there is no inconſiſtency between the belief of the Trinity, and a diſapprobation of this Creed, in which divine and eternal vengeance, is moſt prophanely hurled upon the heads of all, who ſcruple aſſent to any of it's terms which they do not underſtand. Bleſſed be God! tho' bigoted zealots may thus wantonly ſport with damnation, they are not the authorized miniſters of the wrath of Heaven. For my own part, I never read this favourite ſymbol of the Church, without an equal mixture of contempt and indignation. I can never think of impoſing ſubſcription to it, as a *condition of toleration*, without both lamenting and deteſting the fatal influence of ignorance and ſuperſtition.

* Prov. xxvi. 2.

But

But I forget myſelf. Though it is a doctrine of the Church to which our ſubſcription is required, that, Whoſoever does not *thoroughly* receive the Athanaſian Creed, muſt without doubt periſh everlaſtingly; ſome of my Brethren have repreſented all the doctrines of the Articles, to which our ſubſcription is required, as "the baſis "of their Hope, the ſource of their Comfort, "and the moſt powerful incentive to a courſe "of ſincere ſtedfaſt chearful obedience *." However ſuch as can apply that encomium to this uncharitable doctrine, muſt pardon me for ſaying, I am aſtoniſhed at their feelings; at the ſame time that I cannot forbear complimenting them upon the height of their attainments, in the art of extracting good out of evil. I chearfully acknowledge that the dignity of the perſon of the Saviour, is all this in my account. But the doctrine contained in the damnatory clauſe of the Athanaſian Creed, never operated on my mind ſo as to be the parent of one hope, the ſource of one comfort, or the incentive to one duty. I moſt firmly believe, that "God ſo loved "the World as to give his only begotten Son, "that *whoſoever* believeth on him," (though ſentenced to everlaſting damnation by a Creed of human invention,) "might not periſh, but "might have everlaſting life †." Yet if the

* See *An Apology for the Renewal of an Application*, &c. P. 45. † *John* iii. 16.

intire

intire approbation of this Creed, be *indeed* an indiſpenſable condition of ſalvation; the promiſe muſt fail in it's accompliſhment, and many ſincere diſciples of our Bleſſed Lord, would be conſtrained, though in the language of deep deſpair, to adopt the words of *Conſtantine* to a *Novatian* Biſhop, "If ſo, then *Aceſius* you muſt "ſet up your ladder, and go to Heaven by "yourſelf."

ARTICLE XXIII.

IT is not lawful for any man to take upon him the Office of publick preaching, or miniſtring the Sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called, and ſent to execute the ſame. *And thoſe we ought to judge lawfully called and ſent, which be choſen and called to this work* by men who have PUBLICK authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and ſend Miniſters into the Lord's vineyard.

If I am not greatly miſtaken, it will plainly appear upon an impartial inquiry, that every Proteſtant Diſſenting Miniſter who ſubſcribes this Article, declares it to be the matter of his belief, that it is not lawful for himſelf, nor for any one of his Brethren, of whatever denomination, to take upon him the office of publick preaching, or miniſtring the Sacraments.

It is not ſufficient to evade the force of this concluſion, for any Proteſtant Diſſenter to ſay, that in his *own opinion*, he is lawfully called and ſent. It is confeſſed, that we have all vanity enough to think that we are as lawfully called, and as fully authorized to take upon us the character of Chriſtian Miniſters, and of Chriſtian Biſhops, as his Grace of *York*, or *Canterbury*. But let us take heed how we draw the church into this conceſſion, to which we have reaſon to believe, ſhe has very material and inſuperable objections. Will our calling agree with the Church's definition of a lawful calling? And it is to Her Judgment we are required to ſubſcribe. For my own part, I am utterly at a loſs to find out any plauſible pretence for the ſuppoſition; ſince there are ſo many deciſive evidences, that we are *not* in the judgment of the *Church* lawfully called and ſent.

If we examine the language of the Toleration Act itſelf, which ſeems the beſt plea in favour of our being accounted duly authorized for the diſcharge of miniſterial functions, it will confirm, in my opinion, the contrary ſuppoſition. Let us attend to the terms and expreſſions made uſe of as deſcriptive of our Character; and they will be found to be expreſſive of the different views, which we ourſelves on the one part, and the Church of *England* and the State on the other,

other, entertain of our title to the miniſterial Office. We are therein deſcribed as " perſons " diſſenting from the Church of *England* in " holy Orders," under which character we are ſuppoſed to apply for relief; but then it is added, " or *pretended holy Orders*, or *pretending to holy Orders* *", as the light in which the State and the Church conſider us. In one ſection the former part of the deſcription is dropped, and the latter only retained †. Now I cannot conceive that this language would have been adopted, if it had been the judgment of the Church, that we were *lawfully called and ſent*; for it is never uſed in reference to any who have had epiſcopal ordination. And however favourable that Act may juſtly be thought in other reſpects, to a legal eſtimation of us under the character of Chriſtian Miniſters; it is worthy of obſervation, that an Act paſſed in the Reign of *William* and *Mary*, could not poſſibly operate on the *original literal* ſenſe of an Article, compoſed in the reign of King *Edward* the Sixth, who lived ſo many years before. Strictly ſpeaking, it could have no immediate reſpect to us, who at that time only exiſted in the loins of our Fore-fathers the Puritans; a very venerable, but at the ſame time a deſpiſed and perſecuted ſet of men. It was not therefore likely to have

* 1 *Will.* and *Mary*, cap. 18. § 7. † § 9.

a fa-

a favourable aſpect upon them; but ſeems to have had ſome prophetic kind of reference to the claims of their ſucceſſors, which were hereby, when in embryo, declared to be unlawful. Nor is it by any means the *deſign* of the Toleration Act, to determine any thing in favour of the validity of our calling; but to protect our perſons and property, and eſtabliſh the exerciſe of our Worſhip upon certain conditions. Without allowing the validity of our claims to the miniſterial character, it grants us, under thoſe reſtrictions, the liberty of miniſtering to our deluded hearers, whoſe erroneous conſciences lead them to differ and diſſent from the Church.

As a farther evidence of the difference of opinion, between the Church and us on the point in queſtion; it is proper to remark, that upon the apprehenſion of our having *no lawful authority* to preach or adminiſter the Sacraments, in caſe a Diſſenting Miniſter conforms to the eſtabliſhed Church, it is an indiſpenſable condition of his taking upon him a cure of Souls, that he be *re-ordained*; and that not merely as neceſſary to conſtitute him a Miniſter of the Church of *England*, but in order to make him a Miniſter *at all*. For this is not required of a Popiſh Prieſt under the like circumſtances. Innumerable teſtimonies might be produced, to prove that the validity of diſſenting ordination,

has ever been called in queſtion by the writers of the Church. Dr. *Nichols* in one of his expoſtulations, thus interrogates the reader on this ſubject. " Is there juſt ground for their applying " to Preſbyterian aſſemblies for holy orders, " when not only the moſt venerable antiquity, " but even St. *Jerom*, leaſt inclinable of all the " Ancients to favour Biſhops, confeſſes that this " is an Office ſtrictly epiſcopal * ?" In another part of his Defence of the Church of *England*, he delivers the judgment of that Church upon a *congregational miſſion*, in terms not a little remarkable upon ſeveral accounts. " Another " fault, ſays he, which *Arminians* are charged " with, is heartily deteſted by us, viz. Depreſſing " the venerable orders of the Miniſtry down to " the meaneſt of the people, and eſteeming that " a ſufficient miſſion, when the Congregation " chuſe a man out of themſelves, who hath a " good faculty at ſpeaking, and is well read in " the Holy Scriptures, and appoint him for their " Paſtor. This extravagant way of calling " Miniſters we utterly condemn, as opening the " door to thieves and robbers, and tending to " the deſtruction of men's ſouls; becauſe by " this means prophane men would intrude " themſelves into the Church of Chriſt without " any *lawful authority*; and being deſtitute of " all good learning, and commonly armed with

* *Nichols's* Defence of the Church of England, p. 245.

" monſtrous aſſurance and preſumption, they " would have opportunity to abuſe their flocks, " and paſs any frantick notion upon them for " the word of God. This we take to be an " innovation, repugnant not only to the autho- " rity of the New Teſtament, but likewiſe to " the precepts of the Old *."

There is ſo much of High Church prejudice, ignorance, miſrepreſentation, and ſlander in this flaming paragraph, that every intelligent reader will eaſily diſcern how little regard it deſerves; and therefore I ſhall ſpare myſelf the trouble of making any remarks upon it. I only quote it in evidence of the judgment of the Church.

Dr. *Wells* publiſhed ſome curious Theſes againſt the validity of Preſbyterian ordination, and told Mr. *Pierce*, that " this was the chief point of " controverſy between the Church of *England* " and the Diſſenters †." In the ſame controverſy he attempted to convince us, " That our " Miniſters have not a true miſſion, or, (which " is the ſame,) that (which is now a-days called) " a Preſbyterian Ordination, is not valid or " ſufficient to authorize the perſon ſo ordained, " to teach or to perform any other part of the " Miniſterial Office ‡." He alſo ſays, " That

* *Nichols* ubi ſupra, p. 218.

† *Wells*'s Controverſial Treatiſes, p. 306. Lond. 1716.

‡ See *Pierce*'s Remarks on *Wells*'s Letters, p. 26. Lond 1711.

" the doctrine of the Church of *England*, con-
" cerning the power of Ordination, belonging
" (not to a community of Presbyters, but) to
" single persons, by us called Bishops, is agree-
" able to the direction and practice of the great
" Apostle St. *Paul*, and consequently of Aposto-
" lical constitution *." In consequence of this persuasion, his conscience was so exceedingly scrupulous, that it would not suffer him, though in a *quotation*, " to say the *Lancashire Ministers*, " or *London Ministers*, but instead of Ministers, " he took the liberty to put in *Teachers* †;" lest he should seem to acknowledge the validity of their Ordination.

Upon the same principle Mr. *White* represents the Dissenting Laity, as leaving the communion of their lawful Bishops and Priests, duly ordained to their Office; to put themselves under the guidance and administrations of others, *not duly ordained* to it. Hence he takes occasion to call in question, even the *efficacy of the Ordinances* administered by Dissenting Teachers ‡.

Now it is not to be imagined, that the Champions of the Church of *England* would talk in this style, if the Article under consideration had allowed us to be *lawfully called and sent*. Nor is

* *Pierce* ubi supra, p. 38.
† *Pierce* ubi supra, p. 43.
‡ *White's* Letters. Let. I. p. 85. Edit. 4.

it eaſy to be conceived, that ſo judicious and acute a diſputant as the learned Mr. *Pierce*, ſhould not then have preſſed this article upon his adverſary, to have ſhewn the inconſiſtency of Dr. *Wells*'s cenſures, with the publick ſtandard of the faith of the Church of *England*. But to the beſt of my recollection, neither he, nor our unanſwerable advocate Mr. *Towgood*, ever thought of ſuggeſting ſuch an argument in favour of diſſenting Ordination.

Again, ſome Clergymen abiding by the terms of the Article, and the doctrine of the Church reſpecting ordination; and alſo apprehending that the validity of all ſacramental adminiſtrations, depends upon the validity of the ordination of the Adminiſtrator; have refuſed, what the Church calls, Chriſtian Burial to perſons baptized by Diſſenting Miniſters. The reaſon alleged for the refuſal has always been this—That the Baptiſm whether of Infants or Adults by ſuch perſons, was no Baptiſm at all, becauſe they had not a competent authority to adminiſter it; and conſequently, as in the judgment of the Church the Baptiſm of Water makes a man a Chriſtian, and is eſſential to his being ſuch, Chriſtian burial muſt be refuſed in thoſe caſes. I could produce ſeveral inſtances to prove, that this has been the conduct of ſome Clergymen, and theſe the principles upon which

they have vindicated their conduct. But I ſhall only ſelect one inſtance in ſupport of my aſſertion *.

However

* Upon occaſion of the death of an Infant, which happened *October* 26, 1730, in the Pariſh of *C*———, in the County of *S*———; the Uncle of the deceaſed ſent his Servant to the Vicar, to give him notice of the intended burial of the Child on the 28th inſtant. The Vicar aſked ſome queſtions about the Baptiſm of the Child; and ſaid he would not bury it, if it was baptized by Mr. *M*———, then Diſſenting Miniſter at *K*———. When the Servant returned, and made this report to his Maſter, he was ſent back again to inform the Vicar, that the Child was baptized by Mr. *M*———, and that Eſq; *V*——— was preſent at the Baptiſm. The Corpſe was carried to the Churchyard at the time appointed; but though the Vicar buried another Corpſe that afternoon, and was earneſtly intreated to bury this, particularly on account of the Mother's anxiety, who was a Church Woman, and almoſt diſtracted with the thought of "her Child being buried like a Dog;" yet he abſolutely refuſed it, ſaying, it was not baptized by a *lawful Miniſter*, and therefore had no right to be buried by one that was; and that he was accountable to none but the Biſhop. The Uncle of the Child next made his application to a neighbouring Clergyman, who was in the place on a viſit, but he made the ſame objection. He then went to the Rector of *S*———, who ſaid that Mr. *B*——— was in the wrong, but as Mr. *B*——— was at home, he durſt not come and bury the Child. He adviſed however that the Corpſe ſhould be put in the ground, which was accordingly done. The Vicar afterwards conſulted the Biſhop, and upon his return gave a written promiſſory engagement, not to offend in like manner again. I have before me an atteſted copy of the original paper, ſigned with the Vicar's own hand.

"Whereas

However it muſt be acknowledged, that there was as much *ignorance* as *bigotry* in all thoſe inſtances, which have reſpected the interment of *Children*; for the conſtitution of the Church of *England* does not warrant a refuſal in thoſe caſes. The adminiſtration of the ordinance of Baptiſm has been adjudged to be valid, by ſeveral publick Acts and Canons of the Church, although the Adminiſtrator is not in holy orders, or lawfully called and ſent to the work of the Miniſtry. So early as the time of *Ecgbriht*, who

" Whereas I did lately refuſe to adminiſter Chriſtian Bu-
" rial to *D*———, Son of *D*——— *C*———, of *C*———,
" in the County of *S*———, I do hereby declare, that
" upon conſultation had with the Biſhop of this Dioceſe,
" who did allow the Baptiſm of a Child by a Diſſenting
" Miniſter to be valid; and conſidering that the general
" practice in this matter is againſt me, that I will for the
" future, conform to his Lordſhip's judgment and determi-
" nation in this caſe, by uſing the aforeſaid office to all
" perſons, although ſo baptized."———Signed
J—— *B*——, Vicar of *C*——.

Dated *Nov.* 13, 1730.

Mr. *M*———, the Diſſenting Miniſter who had baptized the Child, was ſatisfied with this acknowledgment; but the Uncle of the Child, in order to pacify the Mother, inſiſted that beſides this acknowledgment, Mr. *B*——— ſhould read the form over the Corpſe in the Grave; and accordingly on the 18th of *November* following, the Grave was opened, and the Vicar complied with the requiſition, to his no ſmall mortification, as ſome Women preſent upon the occaſion, rallied him pretty freely. It is remarkable that the Living was given to Mr. *B*——— by a Diſſenter.

was conſecrated to the See of *York*, A. D. 734, it appears from his eccleſiaſtical Inſtitutions (Anſwer to Queſt. 5.) that it was then the opinion of the Church, that Baptiſm, though performed by a perſon *unordained*, who had *uſurped the prieſthood*, ought not to be repeated; though other miniſtrations performed by an unworthy man were not thought valid. It was alſo granted by one of the Canons (Can. 3.) of *Hubert Walter* at *Weſtminſter*, A. D. 1200, which was publiſhed to aſcertain and preſerve all the prerogatives of the ſacerdotal function; that a Layman might nevertheleſs baptize a Child in caſe of neceſſity. And it was determined that even a Father or Mother might do it, *without impeachment of Matrimony*. — This deciſion was intended to aboliſh ſome older Canons, which diſſolved Matrimony on account of the Father's or Mother's baptizing one of their children. For it was pretended, ſays *Johnſon*, "that by the "Father's baptizing the Child a ſpiritual rela- "tion was contracted, which made any future "conjunction with his own Wife *inceſtuous*." In the time of neceſſity, ſays another Popiſh Author, the "Miniſter of Baptiſm is every Man, "both *male* and *female*. A Woman, be ſhe "young or old, ſacred or wicked. Every Male, "that hath his wits, and is neither dumb, nor "ſo drunken, but that he can utter the words; "as well *Pagan*, *Infidel*, and *Heretick*, the bad

"as

" as the good; the *Schiſmatick*, as the *Catholick*, " may baptize *." It is well known that Baptiſm adminiſtered by Midwives, was both allowed and practiſed in the Church of *Rome*, and in the Church of *England*. As the profeſſion of Midwifry was (by an odd connection of ideas) accounted a *ſpiritual* employment, the giving a licence for it formerly belonged to the Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*. And Mr. *Strype* has extracted from Archbiſhop *Parker*'s Regiſter, the Oath which was taken by one *Eleanor Pead* when admitted to this profeſſion. After ſeveral engagements not to lay ſuppoſititious children to the Mothers, in the place of the true natural ones, not to uſe ſorceries, enchantments, &c. and not to hurt or diſmember the Child, the following words are inſerted. " Alſo that in " the miniſtration of the Sacrament of Baptiſm, " in the time of neceſſity, I will uſe apt and the " accuſtomed words of the ſame Sacrament, that " is to ſay, theſe words following, or the like in " effect. *I Chriſten thee in the name of the Father*, " *the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt:* and none other " prophane words. And that in ſuch time of " neceſſity, in baptizing any Infant born, and " pouring water upon the head of the ſame " Infant, I will uſe pure and clean water, and " not any Roſe or Damaſk water, or water made

* *Jewel* Phil. Ch. Par. 5. p. 559.

" of

" of any confection or mixture *." The adminiſtration of Baptiſm was not limited to Perſons in holy Orders, 'till after the Conference at *Hampton Court*.

The diſtinction between the validity of Ordination, and the validity of Baptiſm, as the avowed doctrine of the Church of *England*, is yet farther apparent from the proceedings of the Convocation in the Year 1712; when the Biſhops ſent down the following paper to the Lower Houſe, in conſequence of the diſputes which then prevailed upon this point.

" Foraſmuch as ſundry perſons have of late " by preaching, writing, and diſcourſes, poſſeſſed " the minds of many people in the communion " of our Church, with doubts and ſcruples about " the validity of their Baptiſm, to their great " trouble and diſquiet: We the Preſident, " Biſhops, &c. have thought it incumbent on us " to declare, in conformity with the judgment " and practice of the Catholick Church of " Chriſt, and of the Church of *England* in parti- " ticular, That ſuch perſons as have been already " baptized in or with water, in the name of the " Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, though their " Baptiſm was *irregular* for want of *a proper* " *Adminiſtrator*, ought not to be baptized again.

Strype's Annals, Vol. I. p. 501, 2d Edit. 1709.

" This

" This we do to prevent, and (to uſe the words " of Archbiſhop *Whitgift* on this very point,) " not to bring confuſion into the Church; for " let men take heed, that they *uſurp not an* " *office whereunto they be not called*; for God will " call them to an account for ſo doing: but to " teach a truth, to take a yoke of doubtfulneſs " from men's conſciences, and to reſiſt an error " not much differing from Donatiſm and Ana- " baptiſm."

Hence it is apparent, that their Lordſhips conſidered the application of water, and the uſe of the words of the Inſtitution, as the only eſſentials to the validity of the adminiſtration of Baptiſm. But it is equally evident that they did not allow the validity of Diſſenting ordination, nor give it as the judgment of the Church, that other perſons beſides thoſe epiſcopally ordained, were lawfully called and ſent to take upon them the office of miniſtering the Sacraments in the Congregation. If they had granted this, it would have effectually removed the grounds of the ſcruples; and if they had thought the twenty-third Article of the Church of *England* would have warranted ſuch a conceſſion, they would no doubt have urged it on that particular occaſion.

The above Declaration " was agreed to in the " Upper Houſe, the Biſhop of *Rocheſter* only " diſſent-

" diſſenting. But when it was ſent to the Lower " Houſe, they would not ſo much as take it into " conſideration, but laid it aſide; thinking that " it would encourage thoſe, who ſtruck at the " *Dignity of the Prieſthood* *." This objection came from the Popiſh ſpawn of Archbiſhop *Laud*; which is the more remarkable, when we reflect that the validity of Lay Baptiſm was orignally an High Church principle, grounded upon the opinion of the indiſpenſable neceſſity of the baptiſm of water, to the ſalvation of the ſoul. But when this proviſion for the ſalvation of Infants, was likely to encroach upon the prieſtly Prerogatives, the Clergy of this ſtamp thought it moſt adviſable to ſecure the credit of the latter, though it ſhould be at the expence of the former. How much to the honour of their benevolence and charity, I leave to others to determine.

About the ſame time, to prevent the ſpread of Mr. *Dodwell*'s principles, ſeveral of the dignified Clergy, and particularly Biſhop *Burnet*, and Biſhop *Talbot*, laboured by other means to remove all doubts about the validity of Baptiſm, adminiſtered by perſons not epiſcopally ordained. The former in a Sermon preached at *Saliſbury*; and the latter in a charge to the Clergy of the

* *Burnet*'s Hiſtory of his own Times, Vol. II. p. 603. Edit. 1734.

dioceſe

dioceſe of *Oxford*, which does great honour to the moderation and candour of the Biſhop. The general principles upon which they both proceed, are the ſame with thoſe urged in the declaration of the upper Houſe of Convovation. Biſhop *Burnet* ſeemed very ſolicitous, to prevent the conceit of Mr. *Dodwell* from gaining credit in the Church. For as he elſewhere ſays, "the "Diſpute was not a trifling one, ſince by this "Notion, the Teachers among the Diſſenters "*paſſing for Laymen*, this went to the rebaptizing "them and their Congregations *." Biſhop *Talbot* ſuggeſted upon this occaſion an additional conſideration, which was likely to operate with great weight upon the minds of the High Church party, who favoured the ſpreading notion of the invalidity of Baptiſm, adminiſtered by perſons not epiſcopally ordained. He reminded his Clergy, that the Children of King *James* the firſt, were baptized by Miniſters who had only had Preſbyterian orders in *Scotland*, and were never ordered to be rebaptized. Hence it would eaſily be inferred, that according to the notion then adopted, the *Bleſſed Martyr* would at laſt turn out to be *no Chriſtian*. This was both *Argumentum ad rem & Argumentum ad homines*. There were ſome other arguments which his Lordſhip drew from certain irregularities, which took place in times of publick confuſion, which

* *Burnet* ubi ſupra, p. 604.

he

he thought equally concluſive; and he ſtrongly urges the uncharitableneſs of the doctrine he oppoſed.

The preceding teſtimonies appear ſufficient to me to prove, that no argument can be drawn from the general acknowledgment of the validity of Baptiſm, adminiſtered by Diſſenting Miniſters, which will conclude any thing in favour of this Article's allowing the validity of Diſſenting Ordination.

Nor is it foreign to my purpoſe on the ſubject of this Article to obſerve, that among the ſeveral dangerous poſitions charged upon an illuſtrious Prelate, this appears to be one. That his Lordſhip's opinion was, that a man might lawfully, or according to God's appointment, be called to the Miniſtry, though his commiſſion be not derived to him through an uninterrupted ſucceſſion in the epiſcopal order. This is a plain demonſtration what was the judgment of the Convocation Committee *.

Let us now proceed to examine the ſentiments of ſeveral Commentators upon this Article.

Rogers ranks among the adverſaries to the truth of this article, all who run before they be

* See *Stebbing*'s Defence of the firſt Head of the Report of the Committee, p. 1. § 3. ch. 2. in his Polemical Tracts, Edit. Camb. 1727.

ſent;

ſent; and among theſe he reckons the *Anabaptiſts*, or *Anabaptiſtical Swarmers*, *Family-Elders*, and law-deſpiſing *Browniſts*. Theſe, he ſays, " are " ſent of Men not authorized thereunto by the " word of God, and that to the diſturbance of " the peace of the Church *."

Biſhop *Beveridge* after ſpeaking of the ſucceſſion from the Apoſtles, ſays, " So that none " are now lawful Miniſters but ſuch as are " called by him, (i. e. Chriſt) and all that are " thus called by him are lawful Miniſters; I " mean all ſuch as are called by ſuch as ſucceed " them in the Miniſtry, who were called imme- " diately from Chriſt himſelf. For theſe are " they which certainly we are to underſtand by " thoſe mentioned in this article, *Who have* " *publick authority given unto them in the Congre-* " *gation or Church to call and ſend Miniſters into* " *the Lord's vineyard.* But of this we ſhall " ſpeak more by the bleſſing of God, in the " 36th Article, where we ſhall treat of the con- " ſecration of Biſhops and Miniſters †." I am heartily ſorry his Lordſhip's expoſition upon that Article is not extant; but the Bookſeller, it ſeems, was defrauded of the manuſcript which contained the expoſition of the laſt nine articles. However from the nature of the reference, we

* *Rogers* ubi ſupra, p. 141, 2, 3.

† *Beveridge* ubi ſupra, p. 272.

may

may eaſily gueſs the general purport of its application, to the point in queſtion.

Biſhop *Burnet* gives us the judgment of the Church, on the ſubject of this lawful authority mentioned in the Article, in the following words.

" That which we believe to be *lawful Autho-*
" *rity*, is that Rule which the body of the
" Paſtors, or Biſhops and Clergy of a Church
" ſhall ſettle, being met in a body under the
" due reſpect to the powers that God ſhall ſet
" over them: Rules thus made, being in no-
" thing contrary to the word of God, and duly
" executed by the particular perſons to whom
" that care belongs, are certainly the *lawful*
" *Authority*. Thoſe are the Paſtors of the
" Church, to whom the care and watching over
" the Souls of the People is committed; and
" the Prince, or Supreme Power, comprehends
" virtually the whole body of the people in
" him: Since according to the conſtitution of
" the civil Government, the wills of the people
" are underſtood to be concluded by the
" Supreme, and ſuch as are the ſubject of the
" Legiſlative Authority *."

Since we are bound to ſubſcribe to the judgment of the Church of *England*, this is the idea

* *Burnet's* Expoſition, p. 319.

we

we ought to entertain of lawful authority, in declaring our unfeigned aſſent to the truth of this Article.

But his Lordſhip was well aware of the aſpect this definition had upon the foreign Proteſtant Churches. And as he was both too wiſe and too good a man, to unchurch all thoſe Congregations which were not modelled upon the plan of dioceſan epiſcopacy, he ſought for ſome healing expedient, to preſerve the foreign Proteſtant Churches from falling victims to the preceding definition. He has therefore recourſe to ſuch a latitude of interpretation, as would bring them within the bounds of a lawful Authority.

" If, ſays he, a company of Chriſtians find " the publick Worſhip where they live to be " ſo defiled that they cannot with a good con- " ſcience join in it, and if they do not know of " any place to which they can conveniently go, " where they may worſhip God purely, and in " a regular way; if, I ſay, ſuch a body finding " ſome that have been ordained, though to the " lower functions, ſhould ſubmit itſelf entirely " to their conduct, or finding none of thoſe, " ſhould by a common conſent, deſire ſome of " their own number to miniſter to them in holy " things, and ſhould upon that beginning grow " up to a *regulated conſtitution*, though we are

" very ſure that this is *quite out of all rule*, and " could not be done without a very great ſin, " unleſs the neceſſity were great and apparent; " yet if the neceſſity is real and not feigned, " this is not condemned or annulled by the " article." Becauſe he thinks, " when this " grows to a *conſtitution*, and when it was begun " by the conſent of a body, who were ſuppoſed " to have an authority in ſuch an extraordinary " caſe," it is conſiſtent with the judgment of the Compilers, and of their ſucceſſors *.

Thus the Right Reverend Author provided for the eſtimation of foreign Churches ſo conſtituted, as true Churches with reſpect to all *eſſentials*; though he accounts them to have been " irregularly formed at firſt, and ſtill to be con- " tinued in an imperfect ſtate." Whether this conceſſion is ſound doctrine, conſidered as the language of an Engliſh Prelate; or how far it is conformable to the opinions and cenſures of other writers of the Church of *England*, I ſhall not here inquire. But I have ſtrong ſuſpicions of the contrary.

Here however the good Biſhop himſelf was aground. His latitudinarian principles could not extend the idea of lawful authority ſo far, as to comprehend the Engliſh Diſſenting Miniſters within the number of thoſe, who are called

* *Burnet* ubi ſupra, p. 320, 321.

by a lawful authority; or our Congregations within the pale of the true Church. The very principles upon which he proceeds for the vindication of the foreign Proteſtants, are calculated for the annihilation of all our claims. For we cannot ſuppoſe, that the Church will allow her publick worſhip to be defiled at all, while ſhe claims the character of a truly Apoſtolick Church; much leſs to be ſo defiled, that we cannot with a good conſcience join in it, or worſhip God in a regular way in her communion. She cannot therefore admit that *real*, *apparent*, and *great neceſſity* for deſiring ſome of our own number to miniſter to us in holy things, without which, it would not only in his Lordſhip's judgment be very *irregular*, but alſo *a very great ſin* to ſeek any other, than the eſtabliſhed Teachers and Paſtors.

Ford in his comment upon this Article, contends for what I conceive to be the true interpretation of it, by producing numerous quotations; in one of which this is the account given of a lawful calling to the Miniſtry, in a kind of paraphraſe upon 2 Cor. v. 20. "Moreover, ſince God "from the time he called the Apoſtles, calleth "no man *immediately* to the Miniſtry; it re- "mains that they who are called to the Mi- "niſtry, ſhould be called by thoſe, to whom it "belongs to call others. So the Apoſtles have

" ordained Preſbyters and Biſhops, and thoſe " ordained by the Apoſtles have afterwards " ordained others *." He alſo alleges ſeveral teſtimonies from the Fathers, and cloſes his proof with the paſſage from Dr. *Nichols*, which I have before quoted †.

Welchman in his expoſition of the Articles, inſerts the ſame paraphraſe on 2 Cor. v. 20. which I have mentioned above. And he thus expounds the clauſe concerning the perſons to whom publick authority is given, to call and ſend Miniſters into the Lord's vineyard. " We " know that this power from the age of the " Apoſtles to the time of our Anceſtors, was " granted to Biſhops alone. But ſince then " certain Churches (in other reſpects rightly " reformed) will have it that this power ſhould " alſo be granted to Preſbyters; whether right " or wrong let them ſee to that. We neither " judge nor contemn them. But the caſe is far " different as to our own Sectaries, who rebel- " ling againſt the beſt conſtituted Church, have " arrogated this epiſcopal authority to them- " ſelves. Therefore we juſtly and deſervedly " account theſe guilty of ſchiſm and diſorder ‡."

In

* Vide *Ford* ubi ſupra, p. 210.

† See page 98.

‡ Poteſtatem hanc ab Apoſtolorum ævo uſque ad Avorum noſtrorum tempora Epiſcopis ſolis conceſſam novimus: Exinde

In ſupport of this opinion, as the judgment of the Church of *England* upon this Article, he produces the authorities of *Bilſon*, *Hall*, *Hooker*, *Lloyd*, *Burſcough*, *Scott*, and *Field*, in their different treatiſes upon the nature and government of a Church.

From the conſideration of what has been advanced upon this Article by the expoſitors above referred to, I cannot think it is capable of any fair interpretation in favour of Proteſtant Diſſenters; nor that the liberal explication of it given by Mr. Archdeacon *B*——, will juſtly admit of an application to us.

" The plain, ſays he, and if you will, the " *grammatical* meaning of which words (i. e. the " words of the Article) is, that there is a publick " authority in every Chriſtian Church, to ap- " point the particular perſons who are to mi- " niſter in *that* Church, excluſive of all others; " and that they, and they only, who are ſo " appointed, are lawfully called and ſent. §."

Exinde autem quædam Eccleſiæ (cætera etiam ritè reformatæ) Preſbyteris quoque conceſſam volunt; rectene an ſecus ipſæ viderint. Nos eas neque judicamus, neque ſpernimus. Noſtratium vero, qui in Eccleſiam optime conſtitutam rebelles, Epiſcopalem hanc poteſtatem ſibi arrogarunt, longe diſpar eſt ratio. Proinde Hos Schiſmatis atque ἀταξίας reos jure ac merito habemus. *Welchman* in Articulos. Edit. 4. Oxon. 1724. p. 25, 6.

§ Confeſſional, p. 132.

This explication, the learned Author of the Confeſſional gives us in oppoſition to the aſſertion of Dr. *Nichols*; who ſays, "There can be "no doubt made, but that by *publick authority* "the Compilers meant the authority of Biſhops." I think Dr. *Nichols* is right. But if Mr. Archdeacon *B*——'s interpretation be juſt in itſelf, it ſtill bears hard upon us. For the misfortune is, that however fairly it may be applied to vindicate foreign *Eſtabliſhments*, it cannot be juſtly extended to the caſe of a *Separation* from any, which is founded upon an oppoſition to the publick authority of the Church. And the ſeparate aſſemblies of Puritans and Nonconformiſts were never honoured ſo far, as to be conſidered as conſtituting any true Chriſtian Church. It is very irrational to ſuppoſe, that what in the judgment both of the Law, and of the Church of *England* were deemed *illicit conventicles*, for ſo many years after the Articles were compiled; ſhould yet be allowed by one of thoſe Articles, to poſſeſs a *lawful authority* for calling and ſending Miniſters into the Lord's vineyard.

Dr. *Nowell* to ſerve a favourite point, graſped at this ſhadow of an argument for a proof, that perſons of very different perſuaſions might very conſcientiouſly ſubſcribe the Articles; and has recourſe to the old trimming expedient, of aſſerting that the Compilers only meant to avoid diver-

diverſity of opinions, about opinions expreſſed and decided in the Articles. This Article, in his account, decides nothing on the point who were lawfully called; though one half of the Article conſiſts, in deſcribing who they are that can give a man a lawful calling *. Indeed the Heads of Houſes are greatly indebted to certain Writers, for having helped them to ſomething to ſay in defence of themſelves, for perſecuting thoſe who held the doctrines of the Articles in the literal ſenſe. But like ſome others, they choſe to enjoy and exerciſe that latitude as their own excluſive privilege, while it proved no ſhelter to the unhappy young men from the rage and reſentment of their tyrannical judges. As Dr. *Nowell* has no better proof than the reſt of his latitudinarian Brethren, I diſmiſs all farther conſideration of him, for the reaſons aſſigned in the Introduction to this Review.

I conclude then, that by *publick authority* the Article intends the authority of the State; or in other words, an authority communicated from the King or Queen as Head of the Church, and ſupreme over all perſons, in all cauſes as well eccleſiaſtical as temporal. This authority is communicated to Dioceſan Biſhops, and to them alone, as their excluſive right and prerogative.

* See *Nowell*'s Anſwer to *Pietas Oxonienſis*, p. 95.

The Kings of *England* at the Reformation, aſſumed to themſelves that eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction, which the Pope of *Rome* had before exerciſed over theſe Kingdoms. The Archbiſhop, Biſhops, &c. have *no manner* of juriſdiction eccleſiaſtical but by and under the King's Majeſty *. Their original commiſſions for the exerciſe of their ſpiritual juriſdiction, were iſſued from the Crown during the King's pleaſure only. And among other peculiar prerogatives of the epiſcopal office, the power of Ordination itſelf was delegated from the King, and the Biſhops were conſidered only as his *repreſentatives* and *ſubſtitutes* in ordaining candidates for the Miniſtry †. That this power is delegated to them alone needs no proof. It is well known, that no man can officiate as a Reader in the Church, till he has received Deacon's orders from the Biſhop. And a ſecond ordination is requiſite to qualify him for the full diſcharge of the miniſterial office. This is called taking Prieſt's orders ‡. The Biſhop, who,

* 26 Hen. VIII. cap. 1. 37 Hen. VIII. cap. 17. 1 Eliz. cap. 1.

† See Examination of the *Codex Juris*, &c. p. 32, 33.

‡ There ſeems to be a great impropriety in the application of the term *Prieſts*, to any Miniſters under the Chriſtian diſpenſation. For this character had always a ſpecial reference to the ſlaying and offering up of Sacrifices, which was the proper and diſtinguiſhing buſineſs of the Prieſts under

who, as it appears from the Ordination ſervice, has the Holy Ghoſt at his diſpoſal, then communicates him by the impoſition of hands to the Candidate; and along with this myſterious communication, he transfers the additional power of abſolving from ſin. Previouſly therefore to this communication, a Clergyman muſt not preſume to read the Abſolution in the common prayer, or in the office for the viſitation of the ſick. Would to God he never preſumed to do it afterwards, unleſs the forms were qualified by

under the Law. The Office they ſuſtained, and the Sacrifices they preſented, were merely typical of the prieſtly Office and expiatory Sacrifice of Jeſus Chriſt. Since therefore He has now actually once offered up himſelf without ſpot to God, as the great Antitype of all the Jewiſh Sacrifices, and ſtill ſuſtains the character in Heaven, of the great High Prieſt of our profeſſion; there remaineth no farther occaſion for any other Sacrifices, and the office of Prieſts among Men, is no longer to be conſidered as a divine Inſtitution. The New Teſtament never ſpeaks of Miniſters under this character, as diſtinguiſhed from other Chriſtians; and it is derogatory to the honour of our Lord for any to aſſume it. When indeed the conſecrated Waſer came to be conſidered as a real Sacrifice, by being tranſubſtantiated into the real Body and Blood of Chriſt, the deluded Conſecrator might with ſome plauſibility fancy himſelf a Prieſt. But ſince the doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Maſs, and of a real Sacrifice in the Euchariſt, are both now generally rejected by Proteſtants; we may well be content to reſign the ſacerdotal character to others, neither any longer calling our Miniſters, *Prieſts*; nor our Communion-Tables, *Altars*. May God in infinite mercy haſten the deliverance of every Proteſtant Church, from the reproach of all ſuch Relicks of Popiſh Idolatry and Superſtition.

expreſſions

expreſſions more agreeable to the doctrines of Chriſtianity, and the principles of Proteſtantiſm!

Thus alone in the judgment of the Church is a man lawfully called, and ſent forth to miniſter in the Lord's vineyard.

A Dioceſan Biſhop only, by virtue of his epiſcopal authority, can truly make a man a Miniſter of Chriſt, and inveſt him with ſacerdotal powers. Preſbyters are not allowed any ſuch authority. Much leſs is any ſuch power allowed to exiſt in congregations, as that of calling, electing, and ordaining from among themſelves, ſuch as ſhall appear qualified by the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and competent meaſures of human literature, for the work of the Miniſtry, to the exerciſe of the paſtoral office. To ſilence all objections to this excluſive claim, we read in the Canons of the Church, that "Whoſoever ſhall affirm or teach, "that they who are made Prieſts, or Deacons "in this form, are not lawfully made, nor "ought to be accounted either by themſelves "or others, to be truly either Prieſts, or Deacons, "until they have ſome *other* calling to thoſe "Divine offices, is to be excommunicated *ipſo* "*facto* *." Yet how conceivable is it, that a man may paſs through all theſe forms, and ſtill

* Canon VIII. 1603.

be

be utterly deſtitute of the more important call and qualification, requiſite to the Divine acceptance in the ſolemn and important character of a Chriſtian Miniſter?

But are none beſides theſe lawfully called to be Miniſters of Chriſt? Is this doctrine agreeable to the ſacred oracles? Does it correſpond with the opinion of the Preſbyterian aſſembly of Divines*? Is this conſonant to the Savoy confeſſion†? Or is it held by modern Diſſenters of any denomination? Surely not. Is not all ſpiritual authority derived from Chriſt, the one only ſpiritual Head of the Church? Have Prelates or Preſbyters any power of conveying gifts or graces, to qualify others for the work of the

* Ordination is the act of a Preſbytery. Aſſembly's form of Church Government. Edinb. Edit. 1756, p. 534, & ſeq.

† A particular Church gathered and compleated according to the mind of Chriſt, conſiſts of officers and members: The Lord Chriſt having given to ſuch as he has called, who are united according to his appointment, in Church order, liberty and power to chooſe perſons fitted by the Holy Ghoſt for that purpoſe, to be over them, and to miniſter to them in the Lord.

The way appointed by Chriſt for the calling of any perſon, fitted and gifted by the Holy Ghoſt, to the office of Paſtor, Teacher or Elder in a Church, is, that he be choſe thereto by the common ſuffrage of the Church itſelf, and ſolemnly ſet apart by faſting and prayer, with impoſition of hands of the Elderſhip of that Church, if there be any before conſtituted therein. Savoy Declaration. Edit. 1729, p. 85. § 7. p. 87. § 11.

Miniſtry?

Miniſtry? Nor do thoſe of us who are of the congregational perſuaſion, apprehend that we derive any miniſterial authority whatever, from our brethren who engage in the work of ſeparating us to the Paſtoral office, in our reſpective congregations. We rather conſider that ſolemn ſervice, as the publick ratification of the act of the Church, which has elected, and thereby ordained us to the paſtoral overſight of them in the Lord. In conſequence of this, our brethren unite in ſolemnly devoting and recommending us to the bleſſing of Almighty God, and no farther inveſt us with our office, than as miniſterially declaring, owning, and approving the Church's prior election.

It is therefore to me a difficulty which I cannot ſolve, how any perſons conſcious that they themſelves, are not in the judgment of the Church called to the Miniſtry by a lawful authority; or that thoſe who are peculiarly tender of the claims of the *moſt irregular*, to the title and eſtimation of Miniſters of Chriſt, lawfully called to that ſacred work; ſhould at the ſame time be zealous for ſubſcription to an Article, which annihilates all thoſe claims. I am far from denying the validity of the miſſion of any, who are duly qualified for the ſacred office, and have been called to it by the Churches to which they belonged; but upon this principle, muſt neceſſarily

rily diſapprove this Article of the Church. And indeed I think it a hard and grievous condition of Toleration, in the exerciſe of the Chriſtian Miniſtry, that I muſt firſt ſubſcribe my aſſent and conſent to the Church's declaration, that neither myſelf, nor any of my Brethren are lawfully called and ſent thereunto.

To ſum up all. It appears to me, to be but a ſandy baſis for the hope of acceptance from the Supreme Paſtor, to recollect that we have uſurped a claim to the character of his Under Shepherds, to which we had no right——but a miſerable ſource of comfort, to reflect that in all our miniſterial ſervices, we have no lawful authority for what we do——and but a very weak incentive to a courſe of ſincere, ſtedfaſt, chearful obedience to the commands given by Chriſt to his Miniſters, to believe that they have not the moſt diſtant reſpect to us. Yet ſuch I am fully perſuaded from the authorities above produced, is the doctrine of this Article of the Church of *England*, with reſpect to Proteſtant Diſſenting Miniſters.

In the proceſs of our examination of the eſtabliſhed ſtandard of doctrines, a diſbelief of which is not to be even tolerated; I find another Article which deſerves a very ſerious conſideration by Proteſtant Diſſenters.

ARTICLE XXXIII.

THAT perſon which by open denunciation of the Church *is rightly cut off from the unity of the Church, and excommunicated, ought to be taken, of the whole multitude of the Faithful, as an Heathen and Publican, until he be* openly reconciled by Penance, *and received into the Church* by a judge that hath authority thereunto.

The right of a Chriſtian Church to excommunicate all ſcandalous and diſorderly Members I readily grant, and the wiſe and judicious exerciſe of this right, conduces not a little, in my opinion, to the honour of our religion, and the well-being of our Churches. Would to God that the primitive diſcipline was more generally maintained among us all. But yet methinks there are many weighty objections to this Article, if we thoroughly examine the doctrines it contains. In order to a more accurate and comprehenſive view of the ſubject, it will be proper to have recourſe to ſome of the ancient Canons and Conſtitutions of the Church of *England*, made in the darkeſt days of ignorance and ſuperſtition. Perhaps ſome perſons may apprehend, that theſe were utterly aboliſhed at the time of the Reformation; but this is ſo far from being the truth, that many of them yet abide in full force, and

and have had their authority confirmed, under certain reſtrictions, by the expreſs proviſion of a Statute in the reign of *Henry* the eighth. "Provided always that ſuch Canons, Conſtitu-"tions, Ordinances, and Synodals Provincial "being already made, which be not contrariant, "nor repugnant to the Laws, Statutes, and "Cuſtoms of this Realm, nor to the damage "or hurt of the King's Prerogative Royal, ſhall "now ſtill be uſed, and executed, as they were "afore the making of this Act*." Hence it appears, that as many as have not either in whole, or in part, been annulled by this, or by any Acts of Parliament of ſubſequent date, remain to this day in their full original authority. And indeed no Canons made ſince this Act, have ſo direct and expreſs a ratification given them by Statute, as thoſe which were made and executed before that time.

I ſhall begin with obſerving as to the *nature* of Excommunication, that it is diſtinguiſhed into two kinds, the *Greater* and the *Leſs*. By the former a man is denounced accurſed, devoted to the Devil, ſeparated from Chriſt, and his Church's communion†. The latter only diſqua-

* 25 *Hen.* VIII. cap. 19.

† The light in which this Sentence is to be underſtood, may be learnt from ſeveral references to it in the Canons and

diſqualifies him from receiving the Sacraments. The Article now under conſideration relates to the

and Injunctions of the Church; but from none more fully, than from the following Inſtructions given to the Clergy, in what manner they ſhould explain it to the people.

Populum condocefaciant, Excommunicationis fulmine perſtrictam perſonam ex Eccleſiâ quaſi cadaver ejici debere, nec Cœnæ domini participem, nec divinorum officiorum, nec Chriſtianæ ſocietatis, ſed à ſinu communis Chriſtianorum matris eccleſiæ revulſam, & abruptam à corpore Chriſti, cœlo ſimul & terrâ eſſe exturbatam, diabolo & ejus conſceleratis miniſtris mancipatam, & ſempiternis flammarum cruciatibus addictam. Vide *Reformatio Legum*, Edit. Lond. 1640, p. 163.

And when this ſentence is ſolemnly denounced by the Biſhop himſelf, he is to be accompanied with twelve Prieſts that have burning Tapers in their hands; who when the dreadful ſentence is denounced, extinguiſh their lights, and tread them under their feet.

Beſides the dreadful effect which the ſentence of Excommunication has upon the Soul, and the ſeveral Civil diſabilities to which it expoſes us in this life; if we may credit the teſtimony of ſome of the Canoniſts, it has alſo a miraculous effect upon the *bodies* of ſuch as die under it's power. For we are told not only how much this ſentence was ever dreaded by our Anceſtors, and how much it is now feared in the *Greek* Church; but are alſo referred to an opinion held by the latter, that the body of an excommunicated perſon *cannot return to Duſt and Aſhes, till the cenſure be releaſed.* Of which, ſays my Author, there is a ſtrange relation in *Mart. Cruſius Hiſt. Polit. Turcograeciæ.* And another parallel Story to this, related by Sir *Paul Ricaut* in his *State of the Greek Church.* This fabulous ſcarecrow is hung out by a grave Doctor, to terrify the Fanatick and Non-conforming Party, and warn them of their danger, in making light of the cenſures of the Canon Law.

It

the former. When the leſſer Excommunication is intended, it is always particularly ſpecified. But the Canoniſts are agreed, that when the ſentence of Excommunication is ſpoken of, without any diſtinction of *greater* or *leſs*, it is always to be underſtood of the former. It is a maxim in the Canon Law, *Excommunicatio ſimpliciter prolata intelligitur de majori* †. And the view in which the perſon deſcribed in the

It is however obvious to remark, that the opinion here referred to, took it's riſe from the diſtempered imagination of ſome notorious Liar for the Church, who had more zeal than wit. Before he ſet up in his Profeſſion, he ſhould at leaſt have learned how to give an air of greater plauſibility to his pious fictions. For when it is conſidered, that it was a part of the original Curſe pronounced by God upon fallen Man, "*Duſt thou art, and unto Duſt ſhalt thou return*;" whatever ſhould ſeem to deliver from the fulfillment of this threatening, would moſt probably be conſidered as a *Bleſſing*, rather than as a *Curſe*. Yet here we ſee ſuch an admirable virtue attributed to an Anathema of the Church, that it embalms the body of the deceaſed, and preſerves it from corruption more effectually than all the ſpices of the Eaſt. Beſides, the Doctor was ſurely very unhappy in urging upon us, ſuch a proof of the dreadful nature of the ſentence of Excommunication, denounced by the Church. For as we have abundant evidence, that our anathematized Anceſtors have long ſince ſeen corruption, the only inferences we could fairly draw from theſe legendary tales, muſt be, either that the *Engliſh* Church could never curſe ſo powerfully as the *Greek* Church; or that by length of time, the curſe has loſt its efficacy. See *Godolphin*'s Rep. Can. Append. § 51.

† *Lyndwood* in Conſt. *J. Peckham.* De Procuratoribus, Lib. I. Tit. 18. Gloſſ. (b) in verb. Excommunicationi.

Article is to be conſidered by true Chriſtians, plainly ſhews that the greater Excommunication is therein intended.

This ſentence of Excommunication in moſt caſes does not take effect, until the eccleſiaſtical Judge has gone through a certain proceſs preſcribed in the Canon Law, which requires that a ſummons, or previous citation ſhould be iſſued to the delinquent, before ſentence of Excommunication be pronounced againſt him. But in the caſe of what the Church accounts more heinous and horrible offences, the delinquent is excommunicated *ipſo facto*. The Canons, which are the *open denunciations of the Church*, and thunder out theſe anathemas, are to be conſidered in theſe caſes, as ſuperſeding the neceſſity of any previous citation, or proceſs of any eccleſiaſtical Judge. An Excommunication *ipſo facto*, imports in the opinion of *Lyndwood*, *Godolphin*, Archbiſhop *Wake*, and other Canoniſts, that "there is no "need of any admonition, nor of any ſentence "to be pronounced, which the Canon itſelf "hath paſſed, and which is by that means al-"ready promulged upon every one, as ſoon as "he comes under the obligation of it. The "perſon deſcribed ſtands excommunicated *nullo* "*hominis miniſterio interveniente* *." As all

* *Lyndwood* De officio Archidiaconi, Lib. I. Tit. 10. Gloſſ. (i) in verb. ipſo facto. *Godolphin* Rep. Canon. Cap. 42. § 4. *Wake*'s Appeal, p. 22.

other

other Excommunications take their penal effect from the time of their being decreed in Court, in caſe the conditions be not ſubmitted to within the time limited; ſo the *ipſo facto* excommunication takes the ſame effect, from the moment that the fact is committed. If this be not the true ſenſe and conſtruction of an *ipſo facto* Excommunication, there is no diſtinction at all between ſuch an Excommunication, and that which requires a proceſs in the eccleſiaſtical Court; for the fact committed is the *ground* of the Excommunication in the latter caſe, equally as in the former. But this difference of Excommunication *ipſo facto*, and of Excommunication to be paſſed after the fact, is very apparent from the judgment given by the Canoniſts, in caſes of ſacrilege. He who committed ſacrilege on an eccleſiaſtical *Perſon*, was *ipſo facto* excommunicate, while he who was guilty of it in relation to eccleſiaſtical *things*, was *to be* excommunicated. But if he who ſteals an eccleſiaſtical thing, does at the ſame time burn the Church, or break it open, then he is *ipſo facto* excommunicated *. And that this is the true conſtruction, is farther evident from many of the provincial Conſtitutions, in which various Offenders are declared to be actually excommunicated, as by the authority of God the Father Almighty, of the bleſſed Virgin, of all the Saints, and of the Councils

* *Johnſon*'s Note on Abp. BONIFACE's Conſtit. Conſt. 8.

then aſſembled, without any other monition or proceſs. Theſe general ſentences of Excommunication were ordered to be publiſhed by every Pariſh Prieſt, on the four greater feſtivals, viz. *Chriſtmas*, *Eaſter*, *Whitſuntide*, and *All Saints* day, in his Holy Veſtments, with Bells tolling, and Candles lighted, before the whole Congregation in the Mother tongue *. The more frequent publication of them was afterwards decreed, with the merciful intention of preventing men from falling under the curſe, through *ignorance*. The Conſtitution is introduced in this manner: "Since an unknown "evil cannot be avoided, and there are many "ſentences in the councils of the Holy Fathers, "by which wicked men are ſmitten; leſt "through ignorance they ſhould fall into ſo "dangerous a pit, we charge all the Prieſts of "the province of *Canterbury*, that on every "Lord's day immediately after the celebration "of a rural Chapter, they openly expound to "their reſpective charges, the following ſen-"tences of Excommunication †." The language of the Conſtitution throughout, clearly evinces, that thoſe ſeveral ſentences were to be conſidered as taking effect, *immediately* upon the

* Vide Conſtit. Concil. Provinc. *Oxon.* celeb. edit. per STEPHANUM LANGTON. Introd. et Conſtit. 4.

† Vide Conſt. Jo. PECCHAM Concil. Provinc. de *Reading*. Conſt. 3.

com-

commiſſion of the crimes, to which they ſeverally refer. I cannot therefore acquit Biſhop *Gibſon* of the charge of a wilful miſrepreſentation, in ſaying, that "where the Canoniſts ſpeak of "Excommunications *ipſo facto*, they are, he "thinks, unanimous that a declaratory ſentence "is neceſſary *;" *i. e.* as the final iſſue of a proceſs for the conviction of the Offender, after the commiſſion of the fact. For excepting his Lordſhip, and Dr. *Burn* his Copyiſt †, I cannot find any one authority for this opinion. And his Lordſhip ſeems to have been ſo converſant with *Lyndwood*, and other writers of this claſs, that one cannot ſuppoſe him to have been ignorant of the different judgment given by them.

The phraſe in the Article, *rightly cut off*, means nothing more, than that the offences for which the members of the Church ſhould be excommunicated, ſhould be no other than what are declared to be excommunicable by the Church; and that the ſentence ſhould take effect in no other way, and by no other inſtruments, than what are preſcribed in the Canon Law.

It is natural to inquire in the next place, by whom this ſentence is incurred according to the

* *Gibſon*'s Codex Jur. Eccleſ. Angl. Tom. 2. Tit. 46. Cap. IV. Not. d.

† *Burn*'s Eccleſiaſtical Law, Vol. II. p. 201.

Canons of the Church. For it cannot be doubted, that they are conſidered in the Article as rightly cut off from the unity of the Church, and rightly excommunicated, who are declared ſo to be in the Canon Law. And it is a very material requiſite to the proof of the rectitude of an Excommunication, that the crime of which the Offender is convicted, is deſerving of ſo ſevere a cenſure. The proſecution of this inquiry will furniſh many more inſuperable objections to a Proteſtant Diſſenter, againſt ſubſcribing the Article I am now expounding.

As the Church of *England* has herſelf given us a comment on this part of the Article, we can be in no danger of miſtaking her meaning. But it is difficult to conceive, how any Proteſtant Diſſenters can conſiſtently accord with her in judgment. Can it in our account be a crime deſerving of ſuch a cenſure, to affirm that the Church of *England* by law eſtabliſhed, is not a true and Apoſtolick Church, teaching and maintaining the doctrine of the Apoſtles*? For notwithſtanding the moſt affectionate eſteem for many of her members, as members of the true Church of Chriſt; and the moſt zealous attachment to many of the doctrines of the Church of *England*; we may yet imagine ſuch a definition of the Church, *as eſtabliſhed by Law*, implies

* Canon III. of 1603.

that

that ſhe teaches and maintains *no other* doctrines than thoſe of the Apoſtles, and that her frame, conſtitution, and government are entirely conſonant to the Scripture model. And if ſuch were our ſentiments, we could not conſcientiouſly diſſent from her communion. Is a man in our account juſtly accurſed, for affirming that the form of worſhip contained in the book of Common Prayer, and adminiſtration of the Sacraments, contains *ſome* things in it repugnant to the ſcriptures * ? Would Proteſtant Diſſenters devote a man to the Devil, for ſaying that *ſome* of the thirty-nine Articles, are in *ſome part* ſuperſtitious or erroneous, and ſuch as he cannot with a good conſcience ſubſcribe unto † ? Or if he thinks that the rites and ceremonies of the Church of *England* are ſuperſtitious, and ſuch as he cannot with a good conſcience approve ‡ ? What think we of the croſs in Baptiſm, of worſhipping to the Eaſt in repeating the Creed, or bowing at the name of Jeſus, &c. ? Should we eſteem a man ſeparated from Chriſt, for entertaining an opinion that the government of the Church by Archbiſhops, Dioceſan Biſhops, Deans, Archdeacons, and the reſt that bear office in the ſame, is Antichriſtian, or repugnant to the word of God § ? For notwithſtanding the moſt accurate and diligent ſtudy of the New Teſta-

* Canon IV. † Canon V. ‡ Canon VI. § Canon VII.

ment, neither our Forefathers, nor we, have ever yet been able to find out ſo much as the names of many of theſe Officers, nor the moſt diſtant hints of the diſtinct characters they ſuſtain in the government of that Church. Should we baniſh a man from the communion of the Church, for thinking that the form and manner of making and conſecrating Biſhops, Prieſts, or Deacons, contains *ſome* things in it which are alſo repugnant to the word of God *? Should we excommunicate any for ſeparating from that Church, and combining themſelves together in a new brotherhood †? Does this tremendous ſentence juſtly fall upon all thoſe, who ſay, that ſuch as are Schiſmaticks, in the judgment of the Church, may truly take unto them the name of another Church, not eſtabliſhed by Law ‡? Is the ſame cenſure in our opinion due to ſaying, that other meetings than thoſe which were held and allowed by the laws of the Land as ſuch, when the Canons were drawn up, may rightly challenge to themſelves the name of true and lawful Churches §? Or is it juſtly incurred in the judgment of Proteſtant Diſſenters, by believing that Miniſters and Lay perſons may join together, and make rules and orders in cauſes eccleſiaſtical, and lawfully ſubmit themſelves to be ruled and governed by them ‖?

* Canon VIII. † Canon IX. ‡ Canon X.
§ Canon XI. ‖ Canon XII.

Yet in all, or any of theſe caſes, the Church has given it as her judgment, that the perſons ſo offending, are rightly cut off and excommunicated. Nay in many of the caſes ſhe pronounces them actually excommunicated *ipſo facto.* And if they do not recant within forty days, they may be committed to priſon by a Writ *De excommunicato capiendo*; where they muſt lie till they periſh, if they do not retract. For without ſuch a retractation, not even the Archbiſhop himſelf can reſtore them; and in ſeveral of the inſtances above recited, ſuppoſing a retractation takes place, none but the *Archbiſhop* can cancel the guilt, reverſe the ſentence, or reſtore the Offender *.

Beſides

* When the ſeveral limitations of the power of reſtoring Offenders, to the Archiepiſcopal function, are ſeriouſly conſidered; one cannot help thinking, that the Archbiſhops of the Realm have peculiar occaſion, to adopt the words of the Apoſtle, "*Brethren pray for us.*" For how tremendous muſt be their ſituation, ſhould they happen to fall under the cenſure of any of thoſe Canons. They cannot help or reſtore one another, as their *Archiepiſcopal* powers are circumſcribed within the bounds of their reſpective Provinces. It is laid down as a maxim in the Canon Law, *Nullus Judex poteſt excommunicare, vel abſolvere extra ſuam Provinciam.* So that the caſe of either would be deſperate—abſolutely remedileſs and hopeleſs—far beyond the reach of the mercy of God, or the efficacy of the Blood of Jeſus, for want of the indiſpenſable requiſite of an Archiepiſcopal Mediator. Were I a Clergyman of the Church of *England*, and

Beſides the above exceptionable caſes, more particularly affecting Proteſtant Diſſenters, every benevolent mind, one ſhould imagine, muſt diſſent from the doctrine of this Article, when we conſider how much farther the curſe of the greater Excommunication has been extended, by the more ancient and equally authentick Canons of the Church.

The Clergy wiſely provident of their own ſecurity, improved the dread of this tremendous ſentence, to ſerve the purpoſes of their own worldly advantage; and to render their pariſhioners ſcrupulouſly exact in tithing Mint, Anniſe, and Cummin. So that were it not for the prevailing cuſtom of compounding for the Tithe, the Church of *England*, it is to be feared, would have comparatively very few members left. I refer particularly to the Conſtitutions of Stephen Langton, Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*, now in full force; in which this ſentence is pronounced upon all "that do not pay Tithe of "the fruits of the Earth, and of Trees, of Hay "wherever it grew, of Acorns †, Garden Herbs, "Bees,

and could perſuade myſelf that the Canons were agreeable to the word of God, I would not be an Archbiſhop for ten thouſand Worlds.

† The words of the Conſtitution are, *De Pannagio porcorum*, which ſome Engliſh Canoniſts have rendered, "*The* "*Pannage of Swine.*" But this tranſlation is as unintelligible

" Bees, Food of Animals, and their Young,
" Wool, Milk, Cheeſes however made, and all
" things yearly renewing, Fiſhings, Huntings,
" Mills, Trade, Handicrafts, and other honeſt
" Labours, and of all things due by Law or
" Cuſtom ‡." The ſtricteſt Phariſee would be in danger of falling ſhort, in ſome or other of theſe inſtances.

At another provincial Council it was urged, " That ſome degenerate ſons of Holy Mother " Church, not conſidering the Heavenly favour " in giving them nine parts, do obſtruct the " Miniſters of Chriſt in divers manners, by " exquiſite malicious inventions, in the free " taking of the tenth part. Some permit them " freely to take the Tithes, but not to carry " them by the accuſtomable ways and roads; " but maliciouſly compel them to be carried by " long round about windings and turnings, &c. " &c. &c.——To make wholeſome proviſion

gible to a common reader, as the obſolete original. The tranſlation above given, is founded upon the Gloſs of *Lyndwood* on the ſimilar phraſe *Pannagiis ſylvarum*, which occurs in one of the Conſtitutions of *Robert Winchelſea*, Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*, and is thus explained by him, " Id eſt. " *Paſtu porcorum in nemoribus & in ſylvis, utputà de glandibus,* " *& aliis fructibus arborum ſylveſtrium quarum fructus aliter* " *non ſolent colligi.*" Vide *Lyndwood* Provinciale, Lib. 3. Tit. 16. p. 200. Gloſſ. f.

‡ Conſtit. 4.

" againſt

" againſt ſuch malice and wrong, wickedly " committed in contempt of God and the " Church, by the Oracle of theſe preſents," ſays the Conſtitution, " we firmly forbid," all ſuch offences " under pain of the greater Excommu- " nication, which we will that all and every " tranſgreſſor do incur *ipſo facto* *."

Some have thought, that however ſevere the Church might judge it proper to be upon her own members, it is nevertheleſs very unreaſonable, that ſhe ſhould claim the power of curſing and excommunicating ſuch, as never belonged to her Communion. But this practice ſeems to be derived from the ſimilar exerciſe of the ſame pretended authority, in the Church of *Rome*. Nor am I much aſtoniſhed at the claim, when I conſider, that the ſentence of Excommunication has heretofore been paſſed by a very reſpectable authority in ſome Churches, even upon ſuch creatures, as are not the ſubjects of God's moral government. For we are told that St. *Bernard* ſolemnly denounced it againſt the *Flies* †. I am ſorry I cannot inform the reader, what was the offence which they committed againſt the Church; but as it is moſt probable, they never

* Vide Conſtit. Provinc. *Gulielmi La Zouche* Archiep. *Eborac.* Conſt. 3.

† Pet. de Natal. in vitâ *Bernardi.*

performed

performed any voluntary penance in order to their reconciliation; I take it for granted they all die under the ſentence, and in the judgment of the Holy Father, go to the Devil.

Another objection to the Article now under conſideration, is derived from the preſcribed condition of reſtoration to the Church, after having been rightly cut off and excommunicated. The excommunicated perſon is "to be taken of the "whole multitude of the Faithful, as an Heathen "and Publican, *until he be openly reconciled by* "*Penance.*"

Now it appears to me that Penance and Repentance are two very different things; the latter of which is eſſentially requiſite, to the reſtoration of an excluded offender to the fellowſhip of the Church; and that the former is by no means a proper ſubſtitute or equivalent. The very ſound of Penance is ungrateful to the ear of a Proteſtant; and though it may be a very proper condition of abſolution in the Church of *Rome*, yet ſurely it ought to be diſcarded by every Proteſtant eſtabliſhment.

In order to the better underſtanding this clauſe of the Article, it will be neceſſary diſtinctly to conſider the doctrine of Penance, as held by the Church of *England*.

The

The original idea of doing Penance, is to ſuffer the infliction of ſome corporal puniſhment or diſgrace; ſuch, ſays *Lyndwood*, as thruſting into a Monaſtery, Impriſonment, Scourging, Beating with a Cudgel, Branding with a Mark *, &c. *Et talis pœna corporalis*, ſays the ſame Author, *major debet imponi vili, quàm Nobili* †. It was anciently diſtinguiſhed into three kinds, viz. *ſolemn*, *publick*, and *private*. The firſt was attended with many very ridiculous and ſuperſtitious rites ‡. The ſecond is that which is done

* *Lyndwood* Provinciale, Lib. V. Tit. 15.

† *Lyndwood* Prov. Lib. III. Tit. 28. Gloſs (b) in verb. *Pœnitentias corporales.*

‡ Solennis eſt, quæ fit in Capite Quadrageſimæ, quando omnes Pœnitentes, qui publicam ſuſcipiunt aut ſuſceperunt Pœnitentiam, ante fores Eccleſiæ ſe repræſentant Epiſcopo Civitatis, Sacco induti, nudis pedibus, vultibus in terram demiſſis; reos ſe eſſe, ipſo habitu & vultu proteſtantes; [ut eſt in Conc. *Agath.* ubi adjicitur, " Ibi adeſſe debent " Decani, *i. e.* Archipreſbyteri Parochiarum, & Preſbyteri " Pœnitentium, qui eorum converſationem diligenter in- " ſpicere debent, & ſecundùm modum Culpæ Pœnitentiam " per prefixos Gradus injungere, Poſt hæc, eos in Eccleſiam " introducant, & cum omni Clero Septem Pœnitentiales " Pſalmos in terrâ proſtratus Epiſcopus, cum lachrymis " pro eorum Abſolutione, decantet;—& cum gemitu & " crebris ſuſpiriis denunciet eis, quod ſicut Adam pro- " jectus eſt de Paradiſo, ita ipſi pro Peccatis ab Eccleſiâ " abjiciuntur. Poſt hæc, jubeat Miniſtris, ut eos extra " Januas Eccleſiæ expellant: Clerus verò proſequatur eos, " cum Reſponſorio. [In ſudore vultûs tui veſcèris pane " tuo,

done in the face of the Church, without ſo much ſolemnity; and is that to which I think the Article moſt probably here refers. By the third was underſtood nothing more, than what was injoined by the Prieſt in private confeſſion.

The doctrine of Penance as held forth in the Article now under conſideration, may be farther conſidered either as *performed*, or *commuted*; for in both caſes it is equally efficacious as a Reſtorative. When publick Penance is to be performed, the Offender "preſents himſelf a little "before Morning prayer in the Church porch, "in a white linnen garment, reaching from his "head to his heels. In this garb he is obliged "with tears to beg the prayers of all that paſs "by. Soon after he is called into the Church. "As ſoon as he is over the threſhold, he ought "to fall down on his face, and kiſs the ground. "Preſently the Church-wardens lift him up, "and ſet him in ſome higher place of the "Church, where he may be beſt ſeen of the "People, and hear the Miniſter's reproofs and "admonitions relating to his grievous ſin. "When the Penitent has religiouſly promiſed,

"tuo, &c.] ut videntes Sanctam Eccleſiam pro facinoribus "ſuis tremefactam, atque commotam, non parvi pendant "Pœnitentiam. In Sacrâ autem Domini Cœnâ, rurſùs ab "eorum Decanis, & eorum Preſbyteris, Eccleſiæ liminibus "repræſententur.] *Lyndwood*, Lib. V. Tit. 16.

"that

" that he will for the future watch more dili-
" gently againſt the temptations of the fleſh,
" and has craved pardon of God and the
" Church, for the ſcandal he has given, he is
" then *abſolved* by the Miniſter*." This is Dr. *Nichols*'s account, which is pretty accurate, excepting that he has omitted to mention the white Wand which the offender ſhould hold in his hand, and the Stool on which he ſhould ſtand.—a circumſtance, which moſt probably gave riſe to the proverb, of *The Stool of Repentance.* To which I may add, that in the caſe of Inceſt or Incontinency, the Sinner is uſually injoined to perform his publick Penance in the *Cathedral*, or ſome *publick Market*; and as an additional token of his Humiliation, is commanded to be both *bare-legged*, and *bare-headed*†. Thus is an offending Member of the Church, who has incurred the ſentence of Excommunication, " openly reconciled by penance." An Inſtance of this kind, though not ſtrictly canonical, in the caſe of a Man convicted of Fornication, together with a diſcourſe made to him in a Country pariſh Church, was publiſhed in the year 1733, by the Rev. Mr. *Whatley*, Rector of *Toft* in the dioceſe of *Lincoln*, who

* See *Nichol.*'s Defence of the Church, Part II. Chap. xvi. p. 349.

† *Godolphin*'s Repertorium Canonicum Appendix, § 56.

re-

recommended his diſcourſe to the conſideration of the Committee of the Houſe of Commons, appointed to inquire into the abuſes of the eccleſiaſtical Courts; and dedicated it to the then Lord Biſhop of *London.*

The preſent forms of confeſſion made uſe of upon theſe occaſions, are not near ſo particular as thoſe injoined in the ancient penitential Canons; wherein among other confeſſions made before his Lord and Saviour Chriſt, and before the Holy Altar, and the Relicks in the Church, and before his Shrift, and the Lord's Maſs Prieſt, the penitent Offender was alſo commanded to uſe the following expreſſions. "I confeſs all "the ſins of my Body by my ſkin, by my fleſh, "by my bones, by my ſinews, by my reins, by "my griſtles, by my tongue, by the lips, by "the palate, by the teeth, by the hair, by the "marrow, by every thing ſoft or hard, wet or "dry, &c. *." The Shrift or ghoſtly Phyſician was to ſqueeze out the crimes of the Penitent; but if he accuſed himſelf in conformity to the tenor, and in the language of the Canons, he was thought to "act like a man."

When we conſider the ſcriptural doctrine of Repentance, it is difficult to juſtify the reſtoration and abſolution of the Offender, immediately

* See Abp. DUNSTAN's penitential Canons, § 8.

upon the performance of Penance; for there can be little doubt that many who have ſtood in a white ſheet in the Church, have at the expiration of the limited time, only repented of their diſgrace. And if indeed Penance is to be conſidered as a *ſign* of repentance, I know not how the continued uſe of it can be reconciled with the 25th Article of the Church of *England*, in which the five Popiſh Sacraments, are ſaid "not to be counted for Sacraments of the "Goſpel." Since if we adhere to the Church's own definition of a Sacrament, Penance muſt in this view be one, as being "an outward and viſible ſign of the inward and ſpiritual grace" of Repentance; and might not improperly be called the *fourth* Sacrament of the Church of *England*. The only way to evade this concluſion, muſt be to conſider it as the *ſubſtitute* rather than as the *ſign* of Repentance. But though this is more agreeable to fact, and to other views given of this doctrine by the publick Injunctions of the Church, it is far from being in ſuch a view more agreeable to the word of God, or a more proper condition of reconciling notorious ſinners to the privileges of the Church.

But whatever objections there are, againſt a reconciliation of Offenders by the *performance* of Penance, there are many more, and much ſtronger, to allowing the ſame influence and

efficacy to the *redemption of it by money*, commonly called the *commutation* of Penance; which requires ſome farther conſideration.

By the ſtatute 9 *Edw.* II. Cap. I. it was enacted, " If a Prelate enjoin Penance *pecuniary* " to a man for his offence, and it be demanded, " the King's prohibition ſhall hold place. Not- " withſtanding if Prelates enjoin a Penance " *corporal*, and the Party will *redeem* ſuch " Penance by *money*, if money be demanded " before a Judge Spiritual, the King's prohi- " bition ſhall hold no place." Hence the practice of commutation prevailed in the Church, to the no ſmall ſcandal of our Holy Religion. Dr. *Nichols* ſpeaks of it, as a proviſion made for the accommodation of perſons of a ſuperior rank, " whoſe honour would " ſuffer by publick Penance; and who are on " that account allowed to ranſom themſelves " from the reproach of it, by a good round ſum " of money * †." A practice ſo infamous, could

* *Nichols* ubi ſupra, p. 350.

† A Writer to whom the learned World is greatly indebted, for a very valuable account of the Doctrine, &c. of the *Greek* Church; has taken occaſion in the courſe of that work, to defend and applaud the Conſtitution of the Church of *England*, upon certain general principles of analogy. And among other encomiums paſſed upon this eſtabliſhment, he deſcribes it as "*generous in its diſcipline.*"—

could hardly fail of giving offence to every ſerious profeſſor of Religion, in any period of the Church. And ſo we find the fact to have been. For the Commons in Parliament 1ſt R. II. and 1ſt H. V. petitioned that there might be no Commutations at all. The Petitioners however never ſucceeded; but in ſome meaſure to obviate the ſcandal, ſeveral regulations were eſtabliſhed in different periods. By one, the Commutation was limited to great and urgent cauſes; but this was explained by the Lower

a compliment which I confeſs is unintelligible to me, unleſs it is to be referred to the eſtabliſhed doctrine of the *Commutation of Penance*. In this reſpect, I fear the Church is too generous in her diſcipline, to the rich Offenders in her Communion. But it is ſuch a ſpecies of generoſity, as one ſhould imagine could ſcarcely be applauded by her warmeſt advocates, if any reſpect is to be had to moral fitneſs, in the adminiſtration of eccleſiaſtical cenſures. If the encomium ſhould be applied to the *actual exerciſe* of diſcipline, upon the prophane and licentious, her generoſity muſt conſiſt in a general negligence; and ſo I apprehend there is a great impropriety in the expreſſion. But if it be meant of her diſcipline, as *delineated in the eccleſiaſtical Laws*, generoſity and benevolence muſt be ſet at an irreconcileable, and moſt unnatural variance. For the Canons breathe a ſpirit of cruel ſeverity, eſpecially againſt all who are enemies to human inventions in matters of religion; and with the moſt unmerciful generoſity to the Prince of darkneſs, devote immortal ſouls to everlaſting deſtruction, for the moſt trivial offences againſt the authority of the Church. A ſimilar generoſity to this, appears in the Office of *orthodox* Sunday, uſed in the *Greek* Church. See Dr. *John Glen King*'s *Rites and Ceremonies of the Greek Church*, p. 271, 404.

3 Houſe

Houſe of Convocation, A. D. 1580, ſo as exactly to anſwer Dr. *Nichols*'s account of it, as intended for perſons of great value or dignity—a truly great and urgent cauſe. Another regulation provided, that it ſhould be made only by the privity and advice of the Biſhop. Another, that the money ſhould be applied to pious or charitable uſes. Another, that if the crime was publick and notorious, the ſatisfaction made to the Church, ſhould be ſignified to the Congregation where the Offender dwelt; with publick profeſſions of his ſubmiſſion and repentance. And another, that the favour of Commutation ſhould not be granted a ſecond time, to the ſame perſon, for the ſame fault *.

These regulations ſeem however to have been very little regarded; ſo that the great abuſes which prevailed in the management of this buſineſs, induced Archbiſhop *Tenniſon* to apply to King *William*, to inforce an attention to them, by inſerting an Injunction to this purpoſe, among the reſt which were publiſhed in the year 1694 †. In the reign of Queen *Anne*, the

* See the *Articuli pro Clero*, A. D. 1584, & *Conſtitutiones Eccleſiaſticæ*, A. D. 1597. *De moderandâ ſolennis Pœnitentiæ commutatione:* in Bp. *Sparrow*'s Collection of Articles, &c. And alſo Bp. *Gibſon*'s Codex, Tom. 2. Tit. 46. Cap. 3. Note (t.)

† See Injunction 17, and the Life of Abp. *Tenniſon*, p. 41. Edit. 2.

Convocation made ſome farther trifling regulations. But the Reader ſhould be informed, that none of theſe regulations whether more ancient or modern, are held to be in force at this day. So ſays Biſhop *Gibſon*. However I am inclined to think, that one or two of the more ancient, which ſtand upon a different authority from the reſt, muſt be conſidered as ſtill binding upon all Ordinaries. I refer particularly to one of Bp. *Stratford*'s Conſtitutions, which prohibits the repetition of the Grant as above ſpecified, and decrees that a certain moderation ſhould be uſed, for the honour of the Judge, and the eaſe of the Offender; or that, in the words of the Conſtitution, "the Receiver may not be thought rapacious, nor the Giver too much aggrieved *." But however well this regulation was intended, it is liable to an interpretation, which no man who has any juſt ſenſe of moral obligations, can reflect on without deteſtation. For if it means any thing, it imports, that the ſpiritual market ſhould be kept low, and guards againſt putting too high a price upon the pardon of ſin.

The candid and conſiderate Reader will naturally indulge the hope or preſumption, that this Commutation is never allowed, excepting in caſes of very ſlight offence againſt the authority of the Church. Or he will probably conclude, that

* *Stratford*'s Extrav. 1342. Ex. 9.

however

however far it might be extended in times of Popiſh darkneſs, it could never be carried to any length ſince the Reformation. What his ſentiments and reflections will be, when he finds there is evidence to the contrary, I know not. But leſt my own veracity ſhould be called in queſtion, by barely aſſerting a thing ſo incredible in itſelf, I ſhall inſert at length, the Letters teſtimonial iſſued by Archbiſhop ABBOT, to certify the commutation of Penance, as accepted by Dr. *Ridley*, his Vicar General, in the caſe of one *James Gates* of *Siddleſham* in the County of *Suſſex*, who was convicted of having committed *adultery* or *fornication* with one *Joanna Pratt*, who had formerly been his maid ſervant *. This certi-

* Univerſis & ſingulis Chriſti fidelibus, præſentes Literas noſtras Teſtimoniales viſuris, lecturis, vel audituris, aut quos infraſcripta tangunt ſeu tangere poterint quomodolibet in futurum Georgius, &c. Salutem in Domino ſempiternam ac fidem indubiam præſentibus adhiberi. Ad Univerſitatis veſtræ notitiam deducimus, & deduci volumus per præſentes, Quòd dilectus nobis in Chriſto Magiſter Thomas Ridley, Legum Doctor Vicarius in Spiritualibus Generalis & Officialis principalis legitimè conſtitutus, in quodam negotio Correctionis ſive Reformationis contra Jacobum Gates de Siddleſham in Comitatu Suſſex', Ciceſtrenſis Diæceſis prædict' noſtræque Cantuarienſis Provinciæ, propter adulterium ſive fornicationem cum quadam Joanna Pratt ejus nuper famulâ per eum commiſſ' & perpetrat' ex officio ſuo mero ritè & legitimè procedens (audito priùs per eum dicto negotio, ac conſideratis Circumſtantiis ejuſdem) tandem die dat' præſentium, ex certis cauſis & conſiderationibus eum

certificate was granted, above fifty years after the preſent Articles were compiled, and is therefore an abundant proof, what was the invariable judgment of the Church concerning the efficacy of Commutation, and the extent of it's application; and ſhews us the ſenſe of the Article now under conſideration, as to the methods of reconciling ſpiritual Delinquents.

Before we diſmiſs this Article, it will be proper to inveſtigate the meaning of the laſt clauſe. When the Offender is reconciled by Penance, he is to be received into the Church, by a "*Judge* "*that hath authority thereunto.*" Now unleſs a man would ſubſcribe blindfold, he will naturally aſk, Pray who is he?

The deſcription of this Judge as laid down in many eccleſiaſtical Conſtitutions, will not give the generality of readers, any diſtinct or proper

& ejus animum in hac parte legitimè moven' Pœnitentiam publicam, aliàs dicto Jacobo Gates pro Crimine prædicto injunctam, in mulctam & pœnam pœcuniariam in pios & Charitativos uſus, juxta juris exigentiam, & Canonem dudum in ea parte edit' & promulgat' diſtribuend' & erogand. commutavit; prout ex Regiſtro noſtro Principali plenius liquet & apparet. In cujus rei teſtimonium, Sigillum quo in hac parte utimur præſentibus apponi fecimus. Dat' Decimo ſexto die menſis, Junii, Anno Domini milleſimo ſexcenteſimo decimo quinto & noſtræ Tranſlationis Anno quinto. Vide *Gibſon* Cod. Jur. Tom. II. Append. § xix.

ideas

ideas of the ſeveral offices comprehended under it. For in the more uſual language of the Canon Law, this Judge is called the *Ordinary*, or Perſon exerciſing of right epiſcopal juriſdiction. The acceptation of this term in the *Common* Law, ſeems to reſtrain it to ſuch, as have ordinary juriſdiction in cauſes eccleſiaſtical *immediate* to the King. Whence it is moſt properly, and primarily to be underſtood of the Biſhop of the Dioceſe; who is ſaid to have ſuch a juriſdiction *jure proprio, & non per deputationem.* But in the *Civil* Law, whence the word *Ordinarius* is taken, it ſignifies *any* Judge authorized to take cognizance of cauſes *proprio ſuo jure*, as he is a magiſtrate, and not by way of deputation or delegation. And it is certain, that in the *Canon* Law it comprehends all thoſe, who under the Biſhop exerciſe any eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction, whether by *right*, by *privilege*, or *cuſtom.* And thus we are to underſtand the deſcription of an authorized judge in the Article, as intending not only the Biſhop, but alſo Vicars General, Chancellors, Commiſſaries, Archdeacons, and Officials.

I would gladly refer the Reader to ſome paſſages in ſcripture, for an account of the character and claims of theſe Officers in the Apoſtolical Church of *England.* But as I cannot find any account of their Inſtitution, in the original

original records of the Chriſtian Church, we muſt look into the Canon Law, in order to underſtand their ſeveral claims and diſtinctions *.

The *Chancellor* of a Dioceſe is a Church Lawyer, or the Biſhop's Lawyer, whoſe juriſdiction extends throughout the whole Dioceſe, and who ſupplies the Biſhop's abſence in all matters and cauſes eccleſiaſtical. By this Chancellor, the Biſhop keeps his Court according to the eccleſiaſtical Laws, in all matters pertaining to his juriſdiction. And as his authority is the ſame with the Biſhop's, and extended throughout the *whole* Dioceſe, he is called the Biſhop's *Vicar General*, and was alſo anciently intitled *Oculus Epiſcopi*. This is ſaid to be the ſame office formerly held by the perſons, whom the Law calls *Eccleſiecdici*, or *Epiſcoporum Ecdici*. By the ancient Canon Law, a Layman was excluded the office of a ſpiritual Judge. But by an Act of Parliament at the Reformation †, Doctors of Law were allowed to exerciſe all manner of eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction. So that the office of Chancellor is now moſt commonly held by

* For a more particular account, of the diſtinct characters and powers of theſe eccleſiaſtical Officers, I refer the Reader to *Lyndwood*'s Provinciale, Dr. *Ridley*'s View of the Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Law, *Godolphin*'s Repertorium Canonicum, Bp. *Gibſon*'s Introduction to his Codex, &c. and Dr. *Burn*'s Eccleſiaſtical Law.

† 37 *Hen.* VIII. Cap. 17.

Civi-

Civilians, who are Laymen; though Clergymen who have been bred to the ſtudy of the Civil Law, are by no means excluded from holding the office. And ſome ſuch Chancellors there now are.

A *Commiſſary* is a title of eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction, applied to ſuch as exerciſe it in ſome remote parts of a Dioceſe, ſo far diſtant from the Biſhop's chief Conſiſtory, that his Chancellor cannot without great inconvenience, call the ſubjects before him in that Court. Likewiſe ſuch pariſhes as are the Biſhop's Peculiars, and exempt from the Archdeacon's juriſdiction, fall under the cognizance of the Commiſſaries. Their authority is reſtrained to *ſome certain parts* of the Dioceſe; and to *ſome certain cauſes* of the juriſdiction, limited to them by the Biſhops. For which reaſon, it is ſaid, the Law calls them *Officiales Foranei, quaſi Officiales aſtricti cuidam foro Diæceſeos tantum.* Thus are they diſtinguiſhed from Chancellors. By the ſtat. 21 *Hen.* VIII. and 37 *Hen.* VIII. Doctors of the Civil Law may hold the office of a Commiſſary.

An *Archdeacon* is deſcribed in the Canon Law, to be one who hath obtained a dignity in a Cathedral Church, who has the priority among the Deacons, and is firſt in juriſdiction next after the Biſhop. He hath ſome juriſdiction of common

common right, though it may vary according to circumſtances, and the cuſtom of the place; and therefore in ſome caſes it is ſaid to be *Juriſdictio Ordinaria*, and in others *Delegata*. It does not however like the Chancellor's extend throughout the Dioceſe, but is limited within the bounds of his Archdeaconry. But ſo far as his authority reaches, *in omnibus vicem Epiſcopi gerit*. On this account, he was alſo anciently dignified with the title of *Oculus Epiſcopi*, or the Biſhop's Eye *. Hence alſo he has under the Biſhop a power of Excommunication, and injunction of Penances, &c. Some of the Archdeacons hold their office by *Preſcription*, ſome by *Law*, and ſome by *Covenant*. Where the juriſdiction of the Archdeacon is by Preſcription, or *de jure*, it operates in law to the excluſion of the juriſdiction of the Biſhop himſelf. So that a prohibition will lie for ſuch an Archdeacon,

* As the title of *Oculus Epiſcopi* was formerly given both to the Chancellor and Archdeacon, we may charitably conclude that the cenſures of ſome well-meaning perſons, who reproach the Biſhops with negligence in the duties of paſtoral inſpection, are not ſo well founded as they imagine. For ſince the Canon Law has given them *two eyes* in the perſons of theſe their repreſentatives, they may be allowed to ſave their own; ſeeing the God of nature has thought two ſufficient for one man, of whatever rank or dignity. At leaſt the Chancellors and Archdeacons ſhould have their ſhare of the blame, too juſtly due to the prevailing negligence of inquiry into the preaching, and lives of the Clergy.

againſt

againſt the Biſhop, if he intermeddles juridically with any matters or things within ſuch Archdeaconries. But a prohibition will not lie where the Archdeacon's juriſdiction is only by Contract, or Covenant.

The term *Official* is applied in common to the Chancellor, who is *Official principal*, and to the Commiſſaries, and Archdeacons, as ſeverally officiating in the exerciſe of epiſcopal juriſdiction. In like manner, a perſon duly authorized by the Archdeacon to act in his place, is alſo called his Official, and ſtands in the ſame relation to the Archdeacon, as the Chancellor does to the Biſhop. Thus this character is commonly united with the preceding, in the exerciſe of the power annexed to it; though it is diſtinguiſhed in the commiſſion. So far however as the proper duty of an Official, is to be conſidered as diſtinct from that of Chancellors, Commiſſaries, and Archdeacons, it ſimply reſpects thoſe matters of *temporal cognizance*, which have been granted to the eccleſiaſtical Courts, by the conceſſion of Princes. But the diſtinction has long ſince been ſet aſide, and with very good reaſon, as Temporals and Spirituals are blended together, throughout the whole conſtitution of the Church.

Such is the general view given us in the Canon Law, of the ſeveral offices above conſidered. It

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is foreign to my purpoſe, to enter into a more minute explication of them, or to conſider the diſputes about the degrees of their ſubordination to the Biſhop, and other points of ceremony, of which the diſtinction between *ordinary*, and *delegated* juriſdiction, has been a fruitful ſource. But it may not be amiſs juſt to inquire into their origin. The great Biſhop *Stillingfleet*, has given us a very honeſt and particular account of this, in his treatiſe *Of the Duties and Rights of the Parochial Clergy*.

" *Lanfranc* was the firſt who made an Arch-
" deacon with juriſdiction in his See. And
" *Thomas* firſt Archbiſhop of *York*, after the
" Conqueſt, was the firſt who divided his Dioceſe
" into Archdeaconries; and ſo did *Remigius*,
" Biſhop of *Lincoln*, his large Dioceſe into ſeven
" Archdeaconries, ſaith *H.* of *Huntingdon*. And
" ſo it was with the reſt; of which there were
" two occaſions, 1. the laying aſide the *Core-*
" *piſcopi* in the Weſtern parts, as aſſuming too
" much to themſelves. 2. The publick ſervices
" which the Biſhops were more ſtrictly tied to,
" as the King's Barons in the *Norman* times;
" which was the reaſon not only of taking in
" Archdeacons, but likewiſe of Archpreſbyters
" or rural Deans, who had ſome inſpection into
" the ſeveral Deanaries, and aſſiſted the Biſhop
" in ſuch things, as they were appointed to do;
" and

" and then came in the other eccleſiaſtical " Officers, as *Vicars General*, *Chancellors*, *Com-* " *miſſaries*, &c. for we read not of them here " at all in the *Saxon* times; but about the time " of *Henry* the II. the Biſhops took them for " their aſſiſtance in diſpatch of cauſes, when " the King required their ſtrict attendance on " the publick affairs in the ſupreme Court of " Parliament *."

Here it is plainly allowed, that whatever claims theſe Officers may now have to the exerciſe of their authority *de jure Communi*, they have none *de jure Divino*; though we naturally look for the latter, in the Officers of an *Apoſtolical* Church. But on the contrary, when the Biſhops became too much entangled with the affairs of Legiſlation, to purſue their ſpiritual Warfare, one corruption proved the parent of another.

If the power of theſe ſubordinate Judges had been abſolutely unlimited, ſome important diſtinctions of the Hierarchy, might have loſt the reſpect which is due to their pre-eminence. The Canon Law has therefore made ample proviſion againſt any inconvenience of this kind. It ſeems to be univerſally agreed by the Canoniſts, that Archdeacons cannot inflict pecuniary Penance, unleſs warranted by preſcrip-

* *Stillingfleet*'s Eccleſiaſtical Caſes, p. 146.

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tion. The Legatine Conſtitutions of *Othobon*, do expreſly prohibit them from taking any money, for any crime that is mortal and notorious, or which may occaſion ſcandal; and ordain that they ſhould puniſh all ſuch offences, with a juſt animadverſion. The reaſons aſſigned for this prohibition are very ſubſtantial and ſcriptural. Becauſe, ſays one of the Conſtitutions, "God Almighty, whoſe are all things, accepts no "price for any crime, neither requires an holocauſt "for ſin.——Becauſe the ſinner fears no crime, "which he thinks he can redeem with money.— "And by this means the evil inclination is not "diminiſhed, but rather an authority and licence "is thereby granted to ſin *."

This was certainly ſound doctrine, though delivered and confirmed by a Legate from the Apoſtolick See of *Rome*. I only lament that the Canoniſts have not informed us, why the ſame reaſons do not equally apply to Biſhops, as to Archdeacons; for I am utterly at a loſs to conceive, that the payment of conſideration money for ſin, ſhould be more acceptable to God, when injoined by a Biſhop, than if it had only the Archdeacon's warrant. *Lyndwood* in his gloſs upon this Conſtitution, aſſures us that theſe reaſons are not to be applied to Biſhops; but has left us wholly in the dark, as to the

* Conſtit. Provinc. Domini *Othoboni*, Tit 19.

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rationality of the diſtinction. It is to be remembered, he was himſelf a Biſhop.

A ſimilar reſpect was paid to the ſuperior authority of the epiſcopal Office, in granting *pecuniary* abſolutions, by the Canons of 1571; which do alſo explicitly exclude other eccleſiaſtical Judges, beſides the Archdeacon, from the right of commuting Penance, unleſs by ſpecial commiſſion, in the following words.

Commutationem autem injunctæ pœnitentiæ, nec Cancellarius faciet, nec Archidiaconus, nec Officialis, nec Commiſſarius. Ea poteſtas multis gravibus de cauſis Epiſcopo ſoli reſervabitur, aut ſi quem alium Epiſcopus ad eum uſum *ſpeciali mandato* deſignabit *.

Several other Injunctions of the Church perfectly harmonize with the preceding declarations. But beſides the various limitations in favour of the Biſhops, many of the Canons have alſo reſerved to the ARCHBISHOP, as was hinted above, the ſole excluſive power and authority of reſtoring the moſt heinous Offenders †. To him ſome ſpecial powers of abſolution are likewiſe granted by the ſtatute Law of the Land. For when the payment of Peter-pence, and other

* Liber quorundam Canonum, 1571, p. 230, in Bp. *Sparrow*'s Collection.

† See page 137.

Papal exactions were aboliſhed; the power of Diſpenſations was taken from the Pope, and veſted in the Archbiſhop of *Canterbury* by 25 *Hen.* VIII. Cap. 21. Inſtead of ſuing to *Rome* for any Diſpenſations, or other Inſtruments whatever, it was provided by that Statute, that they ſhould be "had and obtained in manner "and form following, and none otherwiſe. "That is to ſay, the Archbiſhop of *Canterbury* "for the time being, and his Succeſſors, ſhall "have power and authority from time to time "by their diſcretions, to give, grant and diſpoſe, "by an Inſtrument under the Seal of the ſaid "Archbiſhop, unto your Majeſty, and to your "Heirs and Succeſſors, Kings of this Realm, "as well all manner ſuch licences, diſpenſa-"tions, compoſitions, faculties, grants, reſcripts, "delegacies, inſtruments, and other writings, "for cauſes not being contrary or repugnant "to the Holy Scriptures, and laws of God, as "heretofore has been uſed and accuſtomed to "be had and obtained by your Highneſs, or "any your moſt noble Progenitors, or any of "your or their Subjects, at the See of *Rome*, "or any perſon or perſons by authority of the "ſame; and all other licences, diſpenſations, "faculties, compoſitions, grants, reſcripts, de-"legacies, inſtruments, and other writings in, "for, and upon all ſuch cauſes and matters, "as ſhall be convenient and neceſſary to be

" had, for the honour and ſurety of your " Highneſs, your Heirs and Succeſſors, and " the wealth and profit of this your Realm." And by the ſame Statute it is provided, that in caſe the Archbiſhop ſhall obſtinately refuſe to grant any ſuch Diſpenſation, he ſhall incur the penalty limited by the King, in the writ of Injunction. And his Majeſty may then commiſſion two other ſpiritual Prelates to grant the ſaid Diſpenſation; which by this Act is rendered of as good value, ſtrength, and effect, and as beneficial to the Tranſgreſſor, as if it had been obtained under the name and ſeal of the ſaid Archbiſhop. I am ſure I do not at all queſtion it. To prevent miſtakes it is neceſſary however to add, that this *ſpiritual*, *apoſtolical* power can in neither caſe be exerciſed to purpoſe unleſs quickened to action by the co-operation of certain Fees, to be paid to the Officers of the Court. For carrying the purpoſes of this Act into execution, the Archbiſhop has a ſtanding Officer, called *The Maſter of the Faculties* *.

From

* The pious Bp. *Jewel* in his celebrated *Apology of the Church of England*, upbraids the Church of *Rome* with her corrupt management of the Keys; and thus ſtates the oppoſition between the doctrine of the two Churches, upon this point.

" Seeing the ſame word was given to all, and the Key " which pertains to all, is but one; *we ſay* that the power " of all Miniſters as to binding and looſing is one and the

From the preceding account of the ſeveral Officers entruſted with eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction, we may learn the genuine ſenſe, and full extent of the phraſe in the Article. There was an evident propriety in making uſe of ſo general a deſcription, as that of "*a Judge that hath* "*authority thereunto*;" becauſe in different parts of a Dioceſe, under different degrees of guilt,

" ſame; and *we ſay*, that even the Pope himſelf, notwith-
" ſtanding his flatterers, do ſo ſweetly ſooth him up with
" theſe words, *I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom*
" *of Heaven*; as if they belonged to him, and to no other
" mortal under heaven; except he makes it his buſineſs to
" bend and ſubdue the conſciences of men to the word of
" God, we deny that even he (as I ſaid) can either open or
" ſhut, or has at all the Keys; and although he doth teach
" and inſtruct the people (which I wiſh he would ſometimes
" do truly, and at laſt be perſuaded to believe it is as leaſt
" ſome part of his duty and office) but yet if he did ſo, his
" key would be neither *better* nor *greater* than that of
" others; for who made that difference? Who taught him
" to open more learnedly, or *abſolve more powerfully* than his
" Brethren." *Jewel*'s Apology, Chap. 2. § 8.

With ſubmiſſion to the judgment of others, I am of opinion that in this inſtance, the good Biſhop through an exceſs of filial duty and affection, rather ſtretched a point to ſerve the cauſe of his Holy Mother. Several proviſions of the ancient canon Law then in force, and the Statute above quoted, ſpeak a very different language from his Lordſhip. And it is certain that the Church proceeded upon quite oppoſite principles, in the Canons of 1603. So that I apprehend, the Archbiſhop of *Canterbury* is to the full as much intereſted in the queſtions propoſed in the Apology, as the Pope of *Rome* himſelf.

according to the different quality, rank, and ſubſtance of the Offender, and in other various circumſtances, the authorized Judge might happen to be either the Archdeacon, or the Commiſſary, or the Chancellor, or the Biſhop, or the Archbiſhop. Hence alſo we muſt infer, that though Proteſtant Diſſenting Congregations may excommunicate Offenders, they have, according to the doctrine of the Article, no power to reconcile and reſtore them; ſince they have no ſuch authorized Judges in their Communion.

The Expoſitors of this Article, are exceedingly tender and cautious of entering into a particular examination of it; but ſo far as they go, they juſtify the interpretation above given. It is probable they might ſay the leſs, as knowing it to be ſufficiently expounded by the Canons and Injunctions of the Church.

The only thing remarkable in *Rogers*'s expoſition of it, is this: That in the liſt of *Errors* and *Adverſaries* to the truth of the Article; the ſecond claſs conſiſts of thoſe "which allow "the cenſure of Excommunication ſo it be "done not (as with us it is), ſays he, by Com-"miſſaries, Chancellors, or Biſhops, but in every "*Pariſh*, and that either by the *whole Congrega-*"*tion*, or by the *Elderſhip*, and the *whole Church*; "or by every *Miniſter*, yea every *Member* of the

" *Church*; or finally, if not *by*, yet not *without* " the *conſent* of his *Paſtor*, who is to be *excom-* " *municated* *.

Welchman in a note upon the clauſe, concerning the Judge that hath authority, ſays, " *i. e.* the Biſhop, or he at leaſt, to whom this " epiſcopal authority is delegated by cuſtom †."

Biſhop *Burnet* was ſtruck almoſt dumb in treating on this Article. He ſays not a word in vindication of the doctrine of reconciliation by Penance; nor does he enter into the particular conſideration of the Judge that is authorized thereunto. In fact, he does not expound the Article, but gives a general diſſertation upon the nature and reaſonableneſs of Excommunication, as ſet forth in the Scriptures, and practiſed in the primitive Church. When he treats of the cauſes for which, and the manner in which the ſentence ſhould be paſſed, he talks a language directly oppoſite to the whole tenor of the eccleſiaſtical Canons. And in the cloſe he repreſents the Church as having long groaned under the management of the Civilians and Canoniſts, and as having long wiſhed to ſee that effected, which was deſigned in the beginning of the Reformation. He ſays the draught of

* *Rogers* ubi ſupra, p. 195.

† *Welchman* ubi ſupra, p. 35.

the

the reformation of thoſe Courts is ſtill extant. But having ſaid this, he probably recollected the timid diſpoſition of that great Prelate, who moved him to undertake his expoſition, and put him into commiſſion to remove difficulties, and not to ſtart them. Therefore while he acknowledges that by reaſon of the delay of the reformation, the tares grow up with the wheat; he thinks we ought to let them grow together, 'till the Great Harveſt comes; or at leaſt, till a proper harveſt may be given the Church by the providence of God. In the eccleſiaſtical Regiſter of time, there never has been a harveſt ſeaſon ſince the Reformation, and perhaps there never will be, till the final conſummation *.

Upon the whole, how materially does the judgment of the Church vary from the rules laid down in the New Teſtament; where the excommunication of Offenders is repreſented, not as the province of any one individual Member, or Miniſter of ſuperior rank, nor as taking place *ipſo facto*; but as the act of the Church or Congregation aſſembled together, after repeated private admonitions †. The Goſpel knows not any ſuch inſtituted means of reconciliation, as the performance or commutation of Penance. Nor is the reſtoration of the Offender entruſted

* See *Burnet*'s Expoſition, p. 457 & ſeq.

† Mat. xviii. 15—17 1 Cor. v. 4, 5.

under different circumſtances, to different Officers; but the Congregation from whoſe Communion he was excluded, are to forgive and receive him into fellowſhip again *, though not without a more credible evidence of his repentance, than either ſtanding in a white Sheet, or paying a round ſum of Money.

Here I muſt beg leave to pauſe a little for reflection. Permit me as a Proteſtant, ſeriouſly to aſk the queſtion, Wherein does the abſolution of a notorious ſinner, upon the mere performance of Penance, materially differ from the obnoxious doctrine of the *Opus Operatum* of the Papiſts? What is the commutation of Penance, but putting pardons to ſale? A practice which ſurely can never be juſtified, however piouſly the purchaſe-money may afterwards be diſpoſed of. Who can trace in the ſacred volume, any diſtinction in the mode of the redemption or reſtoration of the rich and the poor tranſgreſſor? If I miſtake not, Chriſtianity puts us all upon a level in ſpiritual concerns, and ſuppoſes us all to be inſolvent debtors, who muſt ſeek a pardon and reſtoration to the favour of God, merely from his free mercy thro' Jeſus the one only Mediator. The language of the gracious promiſe, is, "I, even I am he that blotteth out "thy tranſgreſſions," (not for a good round

* 2 Cor. ii. 7, 8.

ſum

ſum of money, but) " for mine own ſake *." And the prophetick invitation, addreſſed to the contrite Penitent, runs in a ſimilar ſtrain. " Ho " every one that thirſteth, come ye to the " waters; and he that hath *no money*, come ye, " buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk " *without money, and without price* †." Can the followers of the bleſſed Jeſus, admit the ſuppoſition, that the common Law of *England* is a purer ſyſtem of ethicks, than Divine Revelation itſelf? Yet if the doctrine of this Article be agreeable to Scripture, this is certainly the caſe. For a great Lawyer of our own times, occaſionally glancing at the doctrine of the commutation of Penance, aſſures us, that " the common Law is " a ſtranger to ſuch unaccountable barterings " of publick juſtice ‡."

Whoſoever ſubſcribes the Articles of the Church of *England*, as the condition of his toleration in the exerciſe of the Chriſtian Miniſtry, is bound to preach agreeably to them; *et tueri et defendere fidem Eccleſiæ.* But how then muſt a man preach? In treating of the forgiveneſs of ſins, he muſt inform his hearers, that there is one way preſcribed for the rich, and

* Iſaiah xliii. 25.

† Iſaiah lv. 1.

‡ *Blackſtone*'s Commentaries, Book IV. Ch. 19. p. 273. Edit. 4.

another

another for the poor. With reſpect to the former, he may aſſure them, that if they have fallen into any of the groſſeſt crimes, they need not be beholden to the mercy of God—they need not be indebted to the atoning efficacy of the blood of Jeſus—they need not ſeek the purifying influence of the grace and ſpirit of God in order to their repentance, nor ſubmit to the reproach of publick Penance. But, *Horrendum dictu!* they may redeem themſelves by a good round ſum of money; and upon payment of ſuch an adequate conſideration, a dioceſan Biſhop is fully authorized to abſolve them, and pronounce them fully reconciled to God. If from their knowledge of Scripture, they ſhould happen to object the declaration of an inſpired Apoſtle, "Foraſmuch as ye know that ye were "not redeemed with corruptible things, as ſilver "and gold, but with the precious blood of "Chriſt, as of a lamb without blemiſh and "without ſpot *;" he muſt tell them (to allude to a memorable Tale,) that *Peter* of *Rome*, who had an admirable talent at interpreting his Father's will, fortunately diſcovered that this was only ſpoken of the ſcattered ſtrangers, who were reduced to extreme poverty by the rage of perſecution; but that the reverſe is true with reſpect to thoſe who are in more affluent circumſtances. This is the Goſpel for the rich. What

* 1 Peter i. 18, 19.

then

then muſt be ſaid to ſuch poor wretches, as have neither ſilver nor gold to purchaſe their reconciliation to God? This doctrine would naturally lead them to deſpair. But their relief is at hand. The conſiſtent Preacher may aſſure even theſe, that the Scripture in conformity to an eſtabliſhed maxim of the canon Law, declares *Que non luit in burſâ luet in corpore.* For prudential reaſons he may beg to be excuſed from quoting Chapter and Verſe, and proceed to expatiate on their advantageous ſituation, when compared with that even of rich ſinners of old. Under the former diſpenſation, a broken-hearted backſlider importunately cried, "Create in me "*a clean heart*, O God; and renew *a right* "*ſpirit* within me *;" not otherwiſe expecting, that God would reſtore unto him the joy of his ſalvation. But now may this Preacher ſay, the Chriſtian diſpenſation being *leſs ſpiritual* than the Jewiſh, God does not ſearch the hearts, nor try the reins of the children of men; but by virtue of the gracious tenor of the new covenant, is mercifully pleaſed to accept of a *corporal Penance*, ſo that it be performed in a white Sheet, in the body of the Church, and in the exact forms preſcribed in the Canon Law.

Such I apprehend to be the doctrine of the Article. Yet I hope, nay I am perſuaded that

* Pſalm li. 10.

there

there is not a diſſenting Congregation in the Kingdom, which would not diſmiſs a Miniſter, were he to preach this doctrine of Devils among them. Such I muſt both account and call it, as a Chriſtian, and as a Proteſtant; notwithſtanding the anathema of the Canon. For I had rather be anathematized by all the Canons of the Church, than forfeit the approbation of my great Lord and Maſter, by aſſenting to a doctrine ſo repugnant to the genius and ſpirituality of his religion. What an inſult upon the moral perfections of God! What an affront to a crucified Redeemer! Why did he ſhed his precious blood, if ſtanding in a white Sheet, or the oblation of Silver and Gold, are equivalent in efficacy with his atoning Sacrifice? How totally inconſiſtent is this, with the Scripture doctrine both of the neceſſity and nature of true Repentance! The ſinner who ſeeks reconciliation to God by this means, can, in my opinion, give no ſtronger evidence of his being yet "in "the gall of bitterneſs, and in the bonds of "iniquity." A faithful Miniſter would ſurely reject the propoſal of *purchaſing* a pardon with abhorrence; and ſay to the deluded Wretch, "Thy money periſh with thee." There is indeed hardly any thing more ſhocking, or more blaſphemous, in the whole enormous ſyſtem of Popiſh corruption, than this doctrine of reconciliation by Penance. Yet if you will credit ſome de-

declaimers, and ſome writers, *this* is one of the *very articles* of Chriſtianity—*this* is one of the *bulwarks* of Proteſtantiſm. Chriſtianity and Proteſtantiſm are baſely calumniated by ſuch aſſertions. The learned Judge above referred to, ſeems much better acquainted with the true nature of this doctrine, and has given a much more accurate account of its origin, than thoſe who would thus palm it upon the eternal Spirit of Truth.

" But though, ſays he, the being ſpiritual " head of the Church was a thing of great " ſound, and of greater authority, among men " of conſcience and piety, yet the court of " *Rome* was fully apprized that (among the " bulk of mankind) power cannot be main- " tained without property; and therefore its " attention began very early to be rivetted " upon every method that promiſed pecuniary " advantage.——Indulgences were ſold to the " wealthy, for liberty to ſin without danger. " The Canon Law took cognizance of crimes, " injoined Penance *pro ſalute animæ*, and com- " muted that Penance for money.—In ſhort, " all the wealth of Chriſtendom was gradually " drained, by a thouſand channels, into the " coffers of the Holy See *."

* *Blackſtone*'s Commentaries, B. IV. Ch. 8. p. 105.

Such

Such beyond all controverſy, was the *orthodox* original of the doctrine of reconciliation by Penance, held forth in the Article now under conſideration. And it's natural tendency ſeems well to correſpond with ſo pure an original. For does not this eaſy mode of reconciliation to God, appear well calculated to be the baſis of a deluſive hope, to hardened and impenitent ſinners—to be the ſource of their comfort in the practice of iniquity—and a moſt powerful incentive to a courſe of ſincere, ſtedfaſt, chearful obedience to the luſts of the fleſh? I flatter myſelf therefore, that, upon mature deliberation, thoſe who, I am perſuaded, do not wiſh to reſt their hopes upon the ſame baſis, to derive their conſolations from the ſame ſources, or to walk under the influence of the ſame principles, which govern the views and conduct of the moſt abandoned and prophane; can no longer in the inſtance before us, approve the application of ſo high a compliment, as they formerly paſſed upon this Article, in common with the reſt. But to proceed,

It is I preſume ſufficiently evident, that by ſubſcription to this Article, we alſo declare our concurrence in judgment with the Church, that all who are rightly cut off or excommunicated, are to be accounted of the whole multitude of the Faithful, as Heathens and Publicans. The Canons

Canons fully inform us who are comprehended under this deſcription. Thus we paſs ſentence upon *ourſelves* as accurſed, devoted to the Devil, ſeparated from Chriſt, and his Church's Communion. For it cannot be denied, that in ſome or other of the premiſes we all offend; ſince our principles as Diſſenters, neceſſarily ſubject us to the ſentence of Excommunication — of Excommunication *ipſo facto*. For ſhocking as it is in a Proteſtant Church, profeſſing to believe in the ſufficiency of Holy Scripture, it is a truth unqueſtionably confirmed by the tremendous roar of thundering Canons, That to ſpeak againſt any human inventions in matters of religion, is conſidered and treated by this Church, as a more heinous offence againſt God, than Lying, Swearing, Fornication, Adultery, or any other tranſgreſſions of the Moral Law. And our *Northern* Brethren would do well to be extremely cautious of ſubſcription to this Article, leſt unawares they ſhould anathematize the Miniſters and Members of their beloved Kirk *. It follows from a ſubſcription ex

* It would be difficult I believe to find in any Author, ſuch bitter and ſevere reflections upon Prelacy, and all the eſſentials of an epiſcopal Church, as are to be met with in the writings of Mr. *Rutherfoord* of the laſt century, whoſe opinions appear to have been the general ſentiments of his countrymen at that time. Nor is there any evidence to my knowledge, of any material change in the judgment of the Miniſters of the Church of *Scotland* ſince that time; though the preſent ſecurity of the Kirk, has ſoftened their reſentment;

ex animo to this Article, that we ought to account ourſelves and one another Heathens and Publicans;

ment; and the more polite taſte of their writers, would lead them to expreſs their ſentiments in much more inoffenſive terms. The Reader may take a ſpecimen of Mr. *Rutherfoord*'s opinion, in the following extracts from his letters. In one of them directed to his Pariſhioners he addreſſes them thus:

" I counſel you, beware of the new and ſtrange leaven of " men's inventions, beſide and againſt the word of God, " contrair to the oath of this Kirk, now coming among " you. I inſtructed you of the ſuperſtition and idolatry of " kneeling in the inſtant of receiving the Lord's ſupper, " and croſſing in Baptiſm, and the obſerving of men's days, " without any warrant of Chriſt our perfect lawgiver: " countenance not the Surplice, the attire of the Maſs " Prieſt, the garment of Baal's Prieſts; the abominable " bowing to Altars of tree is coming upon you: hate, and " keep yourſelves from idols: forbear in any caſe to hear " the reading of the new fatherleſs Service Book, full of " groſs hereſies, Popiſh and ſuperſtitious errors, without " any warrant of Chriſt, tending to the overthrow of " preaching: you owe no obedience to the baſtard Canons; " they are unlawful, blaſphemous and ſuperſtitious: all the " ceremonies that lie in the Antichriſt's foul womb, the " wares of that great mother of fornications, the Kirk of " *Rome*, are to be refuſed; ye ſee whither they lead you: " continue ſtill in the doctrine which ye have received: ye " heard of me the whole counſel of God, ſew no clouts " upon Chriſt's Robe."

In another letter directed to Lord *Lowdon*, he thus exhorts him: " Go on as you have worthily begun, purging of the " Lord's Houſe in this land, and plucking down the ſticks " of Antichriſt's filthy neſt, this wretched Prelacy, and that " black Kingdom, whoſe wicked aims have ever been, and " ſtill

licans; and we agree that we ought ſo to be accounted by the whole multitude of the Faithful. But my conſcience will not allow me

" ſtill are to make this fat World the only compaſs they " would have Chriſt and Religion to ſail by; and to mount " up the man of ſin, their Godfather the Pope of *Rome*, " upon the higheſt ſtair of Chriſt's Throne, and to make " a velvet Church, (in regard of parliament grandeur and " worldly pomp, whereof always their ſtinking breath " ſmelleth) and put Chriſt and Truth in ſackcloth and " priſon. They mind nothing elſe, but that by the bringing " in of the Pope's foul tail firſt upon us, (their wretched and " beggarly ceremonies) that they may thruſt in after them " the Antichriſt's legs and thighs, and his belly, head and " ſhoulders; and then cry down Chriſt and the Goſpel, " and up the merchandize and wares of the great Whore.— " Chriſt ſhall never be content and pleaſed with this land, " neither ſhall his hot fiery indignation be turned away, ſo " long as the Prelate (the man that lay in Antichriſt's foul " womb, and the Antichriſt's Lord Bailiff) ſhall ſit Lord " Carver, in the Lord Jeſus his courts: the Prelate is both " the egg and the neſt to cleck and bring forth Popery: " plead therefore in Chriſt's behalf, for the plucking down " of the neſt, and cruſhing of the egg; and let Chriſt's " Kingly office ſuffer no more unworthy indignities." See *Joſhua Redivivus*, Letters 2, 213. Edit. *Glaſgow*, 1765. This good Man, I am ſure, according to the Article and Canons, died under the ſentence of the *Greater Excommunication*.—And though I think far otherwiſe of his everlaſting ſtate, it muſt be acknowledged, that this illuſtrious Sufferer was betrayed by an immoderate zeal, into a very unjuſtifiable ſeverity of expreſſion. Agreeably however to theſe views of Epiſcopacy, it is common at this day in ſome parts of *Scotland*, for the Members of the Kirk to reproach the Epiſcopalians, with " bowing to Baal's *broad Side*."

to conſent, that the Church hath herein judged a righteous judgment. Many of the criminal affirmations ſpecified in the Canons, appear to be the reſult of a judicious acquaintance with the ſacred Scriptures—of a zealous attachment to the ſole authority of Chriſt, as King and law-giver in his Church—an unfeigned regard to the purity and ſimplicity of Goſpel worſhip—and a firm adherence to the fundamental principles of true Proteſtantiſm. Nor can I conceive that our venerable and godly Anceſtors, who never repented of thoſe heinous offences, and were never reſtored by the Archbiſhop, though they are thus anathematized by a Church on Earth, are ſeparated from the Communion of the Church Triumphant above.

It is in vain to attempt to prove, that ſuch conſequences do not follow from a ſubſcription to the Article; ſince there is no poſſible method of evading the concluſion, but by putting *our own ſenſe and comment* upon it, and thereby deviating from the preſcribed rule of interpretation, as laid down in the Royal Declaration. While however ſuch are my views of the doctrine contained in this Article, no man can wonder, that I ſhould ſcruple on this account, aſſenting to an encomium paſſed upon the Articles to which I have before referred. For there muſt be ſomething very extraordinary both in the

ſentiments and ſenſations of a man, who can account it the baſis of his hope, to be thus held accurſed by the whole multitude of the Faithful—the ſource of his comfort, to be devoted to the Devil—and a powerful incentive to a courſe of ſincere, ſtedfaſt, chearful, obedience, to be ſeparated from Chriſt, and his Church's Communion.

It would be wrong to omit the difficulty of ſubſcribing to what is ſaid of the nature, and extent of the power of the Civil Magiſtrate, and the chief government aſſigned to him; ſo far as it reſpects *eccleſiaſtical* cauſes, when it is aſſerted to be

ARTICLE XXXVII.

——— *That only Prerogative which we ſee to have been given always, to all godly Princes* in holy Scriptures by God himſelf ———

On this I ſhall only remark, that it does not appear to us from the Scriptures, to be the province of the civil Magiſtrate to exerciſe any dominion over the conſciences of men. God claims it as his own prerogative to be the Lord of conſcience. Conſequently the Civil Magiſtrate can have no authority to "reſtrain with the civil "ſword," thoſe who are conſidered as "ſtubborn "and evil doers," merely on account of a con-

ſcientious non-conformity to an eſtabliſhed Religion; or an equally conſcientious non-compliance with the conditions of a Toleration, ſo limited as to afford them no relief from the penalties againſt con-conformity. For notwithſtanding ſuch ſtubbornneſs, if it muſt be ſo called, they may bear true and faithful allegiance to their King and Country, and in all reſpects be good ſubjects, and peaceable members of civil Society. We think this deſcription in the Article, of the power given to the Magiſtrate, is vaſtly exceeded in the preſent conſtitution of the Church; in which the King is made ſupreme judge of hereſy, and with the advice and conſent of the Parliament, may vary the publick ſtandard of Faith at pleaſure. But theſe points have already been handled in a moſt judicious and ſatisfactory manner, by many of the ableſt Writers; and by conſulting their ſeveral treatiſes, the Reader may ſee the merits of the queſtion fairly examined, and fully diſcuſſed *.

Thus I have gone through the conſideration of thoſe objections to the Articles, which equally affect Proteſtant Diſſenters of every denomination. I could have inſiſted upon ſome few objections, which particularly affect thoſe Calviniſts, who conſidering that the Royal Declaration binds to a *literal* ſubſcription, are apprehenſive that ſome

* See particularly the writings of the Rev. Mr. *Towgood*, Dr. *Furneaux*, and Mr. *Fownes*.

expreſſions in the Articles, are too favourable to the tenets of other denominations of Chriſtians. And it muſt doubtleſs be admitted, that the literal ſenſe of the Thirty-firſt Article, which treats of the ſacrifice of Chriſt, ſeems upon the firſt view, to be more conſonant to the principles of the Univerſaliſts, than of the ſtrict Calviniſts. For it is therein ſaid, that "The Offering of "Chriſt once made, is that perfect Redemption, "Propitiation, and Satisfaction for all the ſins "of the *whole World*, both original and actual." And the language of the Sixteenth Article, is not ſo explicit in favour of the doctrine of the final perſeverance of the Saints, as Calviniſts might wiſh; declaring only, concerning thoſe who depart from grace given and fall into ſin, that "by the grace of God they *may* ariſe again;" which ſeems to admit it as a poſſible ſuppoſition, that they *may not*. Whereas in accurate conſiſtency with the ſentiments of the Calviniſts, it ſhould have been ſaid of true Chriſtians, that they *undoubtedly will* ariſe again, and ſhall not be left *finally* to fall away. But it was not my deſign to conſider the objections peculiar to any one denomination of Chriſtians; and perhaps after all, the phraſeology of thoſe Articles is not ſo totally *repugnant* to the Calviniſtical ſcheme, as to be utterly incapable of being honeſtly reconciled with it. It appears alſo clearly to me, that whatever little impropriety of expreſſion the

Compilers might ſometimes fall into, they had no intention of eſtabliſhing any doctrine inconſiſtent with the principles of the Calviniſts. All which Dr. *Nowell*, Dr. *Wincheſter*, and Dr. *Tucker* have of late advanced in favour of an Arminian interpretation of the Articles, is very far from being ſufficient to refute the abundant evidence already produced by Mr. *Hill*, and the Rev. Mr. *Toplady* on the contrary ſide of the queſtion. Nor have I any doubt but that the latter, who is a thorough maſter of his Subject, and a Writer of very diſtinguiſhed talents, will remove every remaining difficulty to the intire ſatisfaction of an impartial Reader, in the Work in which he is now engaged.

If there had been any ſufficient authority for the interpretation given of the Seventeenth Article, by ſome undutiful Sons of the Church; I ſhould have thought it proper to have mentioned that Article, as one liable to objections from all parties. For in that caſe, an honeſt Arminian would hardly know how to reconcile himſelf to a ſubſcription to it in the *literal* ſenſe, by taking refuge in the *concealed* intention of the Compilers. While on the other hand, an honeſt Calviniſt would fear that the favourable turn of expreſſion in the Article, was nothing more than a trap laid to enſnare him, to ſubſcribe his cordial approbation of an *intention to eſtabliſh Arminianiſm*. But

as

as the Article now ſtands, I think Calviniſts can have no reaſonable exceptions againſt it; and it is neither my intention nor inclination, to find fault with the *orthodoxy* of the Articles. I confine my cenſures to their *heterodoxy*, *inconſiſtency*, and *unſcriptural ſeverity*, ſo far as all parties are concerned. Some perſons have indeed thought, that the Author of a late Diſſertation upon that Article, has fully proved it not to be Calviniſtical; but I am far from being convinced that the proof is ſatisfactory. If it was the intention of the Compilers to eſtabliſh the Arminian doctrine, I am ſure that *Cranmer* totally neglected the counſel of his Friend *Melanchthon*, who adviſed him "to avoid all am-" biguities of expreſſion; ſaying, that in the " Church, it was beſt to call a Spade a Spade, " and not to caſt ambiguous words before " poſterity, as an apple of contention—that " nothing ſhould be left under *general terms*, " but expreſſed with all the perſpicuity and " diſtinctneſs imaginable." Dr. *Winchester* (who is ſaid to be the Author of that Diſſertation,) has however greatly miſrepreſented Calviniſm, and brought many paſſages to favour the Arminian interpretation, which are not at all to the purpoſe. By an inaccurate ſtate of the true point of difference, between the Calviniſts and Arminians on this ſubject, he has given an appearance of plauſibility to many teſtimonies,

which would be found to be not at all inconſiſtent with the principles of Calviniſm, when more accurately examined. The true ſtate of the queſtion, is, Whether Predeſtination follows from the foreſight of faith and obedience? Or whether faith and obedience are the effects and conſequences of the free, gratuitous, and ſovereign purpoſe of God, predeſtinating his choſen people through Jeſus Chriſt, unto the enjoyment of everlaſting life? The Doctor ſometimes treats the Calviniſtical notion of an *irreſpective* Election, as if it was meant to exclude all reſpect to faith and obedience, as the certain *fruit*, and neceſſary *evidence* of Election—or as if it was ſuppoſed by the Calviniſts, that men might be finally ſaved, without either faith or holineſs. Whereas they only exclude a reſpect to them as the *moving cauſe*, and *foreſeen reaſon* of Predeſtination unto life; and are to the full, as ſtrenuous Advocates for the Predeſtination of the *means*, as of the *end*. Now in this reſpect, the Article ſtrictly correſponds with the principles of the Calviniſts; for it clearly holds forth the ſecret counſel of God "to deliver from curſe and damnation, thoſe whom he hath choſen in Chriſt "out of mankind," as the *Unde* derivatur of their Vocation, and of their obedience to the Call; of their Juſtification, Adoption, Sanctification, and religious Walk, as well as final Salvation; which may be plainly diſcovered in the

Engliſh,

English, but more clearly in the *Latin* Edition of the Articles. So that though the Doctor has represented the Article, as framed in opposition to, what he terms, the rigid doctrine of *Calvin*, there appears to be no solid foundation for this hypothesis *. The medium of proof which he has chosen, is in itself liable to some objections; and had before been applied at least with equal, if not greater success, in favour of the contrary conclusion, by Mr. *Hill*; who has produced numerous testimonies from the Writers of those times, not invalidated by this learned Doctor.

* I apprehend it is no reflection upon the modern Advocates for the Arminian interpretation of the Articles, to say that the Divines of the Church of *England* of the last Century, were full as well qualified to judge of the sense of the Compilers, as any Writers of the present day. Now it appears from the Copy of the Proceedings of some learned Divines, appointed by the Lords, to meet at the Bishop of *Lincoln*'s in *Westminster*, A. D. 1641, touching Innovations in the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of *England*; that they considered Arminianism as repugnant to the original Doctrine of the Church. For the thirteenth Article of Innovations in Doctrine is thus expressed.

" Some have defended the whole gross substance of " Arminianism, that *Electio est ex fide præviså*, That the " act of Conversion depends upon the concurrence of Man's " free Will, *That the justified Man may fall finally and totally* " *from grace.*"

This Assembly consisted of the great Abp. *Usher*, Bp. *Williams*, Dr. *Prideaux*, Dr. *Ward*, Dr. *Brownrig*, Dr. *Feately*, and Dr. *Hacket*. I do not remember ever to have seen this testimony invalidated by any of the Arminian Writers.

The

The queſtion may certainly be brought to a much more ſpeedy and unexceptionable determination, by comparing the Article with the Inſtitutes of *Calvin* himſelf. And there is ſuch a perfect agreement between them in the ſentiment, and in ſome paſſages, ſuch a remarkable coincidence of expreſſion, that I cannot forbear ſuſpecting, that Dr. *Wincheſter* never read the writings of that Reformer on this ſubject. Upon the cloſeſt compariſon, the principal difference I can diſcern, is, that *Calvin* wrote by far the moſt elegant *Latin* *. *Calvin* and the Compilers agree in their repreſentation of the origin and ſource of election—of the fruits and effects of it—of the means of aſcertaining it—and of the danger of looking only to the purpoſe of God, without having reſpect to the ſcriptural ſigns and evidences of election. Dr. *Wincheſter* indeed ſpeaks of *Calvin* as never taking the merits and death of Chriſt into the account, in treating of our election. But the truth is, that the Reformer employs a whole ſection, to prove that Chriſt is the foundation both of our election and calling; or that Believers are choſen and called only in and through him †. I therefore diſmiſs all farther conſideration of this Article, as fully perſuaded of its orthodoxy.

* Compare the *Latin* Edition of the Articles with *Calvin*'s Inſtitutions, Lib. III. Cap. 24. § 1, 4.

† *Calvin* Inſtit. ubi ſupra, § 5.

In

In the courſe of the preceding Review, I have taken no notice of a modern Commentator upon the Articles. For though the title of his Work, would lead one to imagine it deſerved ſome peculiar regard, it appears upon examination to be not at all to my purpoſe. It is intitled *A Scriptural Comment upon the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England.* But then it contains nothing more, than a collection of Texts of Scripture upon the *ſubjects* of the Articles, which do by no means always agree with the particular view and *explication* of thoſe ſubjects, as given in the Articles. There is not a ſingle paſſage alleged, which has the moſt remote tendency to prove thoſe things to be agreeable to Scripture, which I have attempted to prove are exceptionable in the Articles. The Author indeed tells us, that he hopes "every candid mind "will allow, that the Articles of Faith in "the *Church of England*, are in exact uniſon "with the Scriptures." But, I am ſure, this was hoping againſt hope. For if the Reader will take the pains to examine the Texts produced by the Author, to prove that the Thirty-third Article of the Church (for inſtance) is in exact uniſon with the Scriptures; he will find that thoſe paſſages ſufficiently prove it to be the doctrine of Scripture, that ſcandalous Members ought to be excommunicated by the Congregation, after repeated Admonition. But there is not

not a word of Excommunications *ipſo facto*, nor of the adminiſtration of ſuch eccleſiaſtical cenſures by a Chancellor, Commiſſary, or Archdeacon, &c. He will alſo diſcern, that it is the doctrine of the New Teſtament, that ſuch ſhould be received again by the Church into their Communion, after ſufficient evidence of their genuine penitential ſorrow. But it is beyond the critical ſkill of the greateſt Maſter of modern Cabaliſm, to find out a *ſyllable*, or even a *letter* in the Texts produced by the Author, in favour of *Reconciliation by Penance*——by the Offender's kiſſing the ſtone Pavement of a Church, repeating a penitential Form, and dreſſing himſelf up in an Habit, fitted only to frighten pregnant Women, and Children—or by the payment of a good round ſum of Money, as the condition of exemption from ſubmitting to this penitential Farce. Nor is there a tittle reſpecting ſuch authorized Judges as are referred to in the Article; nor the moſt diſtant intimation of *any caſe*, in which none but an Archbiſhop can reconcile the excommunicated Member. How far then do thoſe Texts fall ſhort of proving the truth of the Article! I have produced the ſame paſſages in ſupport of the different opinion and practice of the Proteſtant Diſſenters; and which of the two has the better right, to repreſent his principles as in exact uniſon with the Scriptures, I am very content any man of common

common ſenſe and honeſty ſhould determine. I cannot therefore agree with the Author, when he ſays " Our Articles have as many Friends as " the Truths have which are contained in " them." For there are many perſons, who are Friends to all the Truths they contain, and yet diſapprove the Articles, on account of the many errors incorporated with thoſe Truths. Surely a Gentleman, a Scholar, and a Divine, who was capable of making ſuch a diſplay of his Literature in an Appendix, muſt know better than to think, that the Texts he has produced under this, and ſome other Articles, do really prove the *ſeveral propoſitions* contained in thoſe Articles. Is not this then (to allude to his own words,) being guilty of an atrocious attempt, if not to corrupt, yet infamouſly to miſapply the word of God, in order to deceive the ignorant and unlearned part of Mankind, and bring them over to his opinion *?

From the ſeveral authorities by which I have ſupported my objections, every intelligent Reader will be fully qualified to judge for himſelf, Whether ſuch Articles can with any propriety be called the *very Articles of Chriſtianity*—whether they agree with the language, and breathe the ſpirit of the New Teſtament—and whether there

* *Madan's* Scriptural Comment, p. 76, 80.

is

is not a peculiar impropriety in requiring a ſubſcription to *ſome* of them, from Proteſtant Diſſenting Miniſters? Or whether on the other hand, thoſe who object to them are juſtly compared to *Epicurean* Atheiſts, and the Fools who ſay in their heart there is no God?

It was ſurely a very ill compliment paid to an inſpired Apoſtle, when ſome late Advocates for perpetuating the obligation to ſubſcribe theſe Articles of the Church, adopted one of his noble declarations in vindication of their conduct, at the celebration of a *Te Deum* upon occaſion of the Rejection of the Diſſenters Bill. For St. *Paul*'s epiſtles will fully inform them, that thoſe who *can do nothing againſt the Truth, but for the Truth*, ought not to ſubſcribe their *own belief* of ſome of the doctrines contained in the Articles above reviewed; much leſs plead for the continued impoſition of a ſubſcription to them upon others, as the condition of Toleration. If however ſuch is their view of the perfect conformity of the Articles to the Truth, they ſhould inſtantly quit all pretenſions to the *miniſterial* character; ſince according to the Twenty-third Article of the Church, not one of them is *lawfully called* to take upon him the office of publick preaching, or miniſtering the Sacraments in the Congregation. But I am perſuaded this is too mortifying a doctrine to meet

meet with their approbation, and is far from being in *their* judgment, perfectly conſiſtent with the Truth.

Perhaps many may be ſatisfied, that taking Scripture to be the rule of our Faith, the objections I have urged to the Articles, are well founded. But then they have ſuch a dreadful notion of hereſy, that they think it ſafer to abide by the errors of the Church, than by the truth of the Scriptures; ſince both the ancient Canon and Statute Law, will bring them under the denomination of Hereticks, if they ſhould happen to accord in judgment with me. *Lyndwood* defines an Heretick, to be one who doubts concerning the Catholick Faith, and neglects to keep thoſe things, which the *Roman* Church hath appointed or decreed to keep *. And the Statute 12 *Hen.* IV. Cap. 15. gives a ſimilar deſcription of Hereticks, as teachers of erroneous opinions, contrary to the Faith and bleſſed Determinations of the Holy Church. Theſe Definitions are now frequently transferred to the publick Faith, as varied in the preſent Eſtabliſhment. And terrified by ſuch apprehenſions, many dare not think for themſelves; but out of regard to their own ſafety, "have "recourſe to *implicit* Faith, and imitate that "prudent Monk, who, when Satan would have

* *Lyndwood* Provinc. Lib. V. Tit. 5. Gloſs (l) in verb. *Declarentur.*

"drawn

" drawn him into Hereſy, by aſking him what " he believed of a certain point, anſwered, *Id* " *credo quod credit Eccleſia.* But, *Quid credit Eccleſia?* ſaid Satan. *Id quod Ego credo*, replied the other." It is a juſt obſervation of an elegant Writer on this head, that " where arbitrary " power has prevailed, nothing has proved " more profitable than either obſequious dulneſs, " or a political palſy in the head, nodding and " aſſenting to all."

Omnia omnibus annuens *.

Of the numerous Authors who have pleaded for a ſtrict adherence to the publick deciſions of the Church, there is no man among the Moderns, who ſeems to enter ſo deeply into the true ſpirit of the ancient Canon Law, as the famous Archdeacon Dr. *Balguy*, who, according to his own account, would imitate the Monk wherever he went, and nod aſſent to any Creed, for the ſake of a Stall in a Cathedral; as his attachment to Chriſtianity is only *local*, founded not upon it's divine original and intrinſic excellence, but upon the *eſtabliſhment* of that Religion in the Country where he reſides. " If, " ſays he, in his Charge to the Clergy, it ſhould " be thought that I am here offering a defence " of Popery, it would only be too candid an " inter-

* Dr. *Jortin*'s Preface to his *Remarks on Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory*, p. 27, 28.

" interpretation. I mean to defend not Popery " only *, but Paganiſm itſelf. I mean to defend " every eſtabliſhed Religion under Heaven." Conſequently he would become an avowed enemy to Chriſtianity, where any other Religion was eſtabliſhed. Much might be ſaid to expoſe the inconſiſtency of theſe principles, with genuine Chriſtianity and Proteſtantiſm. Thoſe who hold them can with no propriety be ranked among Proteſtants. But I forbear—the Doctor has already been beaten with many Stripes. We have for our comfort a more ſure word of prophecy, to which we do well to take heed; though by ſo doing, we ſhall in many inſtances unqueſtionably incur the guilt of Hereſy, if we give any credit to ſuch eccleſiaſtical repreſentations of the mutability of Truth.

Others will not carry the obligation of abiding by the determination of the Church, any farther

* When an *Archdeacon* was exhorting his Clergy to ſo firm an attachment to the Church of *England*, there was a peculiar impropriety in letting fall any intimation of his own willingneſs to defend Popery, if it ſhould ever happen to be the eſtabliſhed Religion. For every Archdeacon was injoined by the Canons of 1571, among other Books, particularly to have *The Monuments of the Martyrs* in his own Library. This Injunction was certainly intended, to cheriſh in their minds an irreconcilable averſion to Popery, wherever profeſſed, or *eſtabliſhed*—that it might never find an Advocate in that honourable rank of the Clergy.

back than to the time of the Reformation; reprobating ſuch only as Hereticks, who diſapprove any of the Articles now eſtabliſhed. Upon this principle, the Author of *A Letter to the Diſſenting Miniſters*, has thrown out ſome very illiberal reflections, inſinuating that if we diſbelieve any of theſe, we are no Proteſtants. But I may venture to aſſert, that the Author upon his own principles, is then as little intitled to the character of a Proteſtant, as any of us. It is however very abſurd, to ſet up the principles of Proteſtantiſm, in *oppoſition* to a regard to the Scriptures. Proteſtants ſhould all agree in maintaining a ſupreme veneration for the word of God, however they may differ in their interpretation of particular Paſſages. Men may alter their judgments in different periods of life, without forfeiting the character of Proteſtants in any. Nor is there any reaſon, that men ſhould be unalterably bound to maintain every ſentiment and poſition in a Creed, becauſe it was framed by Proteſtants. The beſt of men have no juſt pretenſions to Infallibility. " Indeed to be ab-
" ſolutely againſt all changes, is either great
" folly, or great wickedneſs. Things may have
" been wrong conſtituted originally: they may
" have degenerated ſince: they may be attended
" now with different circumſtances: and alte-
" rations may not only be reaſonable to cure

" preſent complaints, but neceſſary to prevent " worſe diſorders *."

Perhaps others may ſuggeſt, that my objections reſpect only the *minutiæ* of Religion—that they are mere trifles, which are not worth diſputing about. But I beg leave to reply, that nothing is to be accounted a trifle in which conſcience is concerned. A truly upright man, will always find as much difficulty to ſubſcribe to the truth of what he really diſbelieves, in matters of little importance, as in more momentous caſes. The law of truth binds us not to a partial, but to an univerſal obſervation of it's ſacred injunctions. And when men have once broken down the fence which God has ſet up, it will be difficult to erect any other boundary. When men are accuſtomed to *trifle* with conſcience, in what they account *trifling* matters; it is a great chance, if any objections or difficulties, will appear *any other than trifles*, whenever intereſt and preferment may call aloud upon them, to repeat their violations of the law of truth. I cannot forbear lamenting upon this occaſion, that the requiſition of ſubſcriptions, has been the parent of ſo many ingenious inventions, to teach men how they may play tricks with their conſciences; that the eſſential and

* Bp. of *Oxford*'s (Dr. *Secker*) Sermon before the H. of of Lords, *May* 29, 1759, p. 12.

eternal difference between right and wrong, ſeems to be almoſt ſunk in the apprehenſions of ſome men, into a mere *nominal* diſtinction.

Nor can I by any means admit, that the objections above urged are trifling either in themſelves, or in their conſequences. It is no trifle, in my account, to paſs a ſentence of damnation upon my Fellow-chriſtians, who may differ from me in their modes of explication, and forms of expreſſion, on ſome particular points of Faith. It is no trifle for a Proteſtant Diſſenting Miniſter, to ſubſcribe himſelf an *Uſurper* of the ſacred character he ſuſtains. Nor can it be a trifle to any man who believes in a ſtate of future rewards and puniſhments, to ſign his own *Mittimus* to the priſon of Hell.

But ſome may be ready to ſay, If there is any propriety in theſe objections, how could the preſent bench of Biſhops, who are ſaid to be ſo diſtinguiſhed for their moderation and candour, ſo ſtrenuouſly plead againſt aboliſhing the requiſition of ſubſcription, from Proteſtant Diſſenting Miniſters?

The firſt and moſt obvious reaſon to be aſſigned, which will naturally occur to every *honeſt* man, is, *Their own firm perſuaſion both of the truth and importance of every one of the*

Articles. For there is ſomething ſo ſhocking in the ſuppoſition, that the Right Reverend Bench could wiſh any ſet of men, to be bound to ſubſcribe and to preach, what their Lordſhips in their own conſciences do not believe to be both *true* and *important*, that I would be the laſt to admit any ſuſpicion of this kind. I have no poſitive evidence of their diſbelief of the Articles, which have been reviewed in the preceding pages; yet I muſt join with many in lamenting, that their oppoſition to us, is the only *apparent* evidence of their belief of ſome others. I ſhould congratulate the Church, were I fully convinced of their attachment to ſome of thoſe important and glorious truths, which are held forth in many of the Articles. I ſhould then hope to ſee the characters of an USHER, a LEIGHTON, or an HALL revived in the preſent day, in their indefatigable labours for promoting the everlaſting ſalvation of precious ſouls, by preaching the unſearchable riches of Chriſt. But this point may perhaps be more ſatisfactorily ſettled, by ſome perſons better ſkilled in modern caſuiſtry, than I pretend to be. May I not however be permitted to ſtate my difficulties, and draw up a caſe for the determination of the Learned?

It is certain, no man could *ſuſpect* the Thirty-nine Articles to be the ſtandard of the national

Faith, from any of the Sermons which have been preached and publiſhed, by the Biſhops of the Church of *England* for many years. There is a certain ſavour which uſually characterizes the diſcourſes of ſuch Miniſters, as believe certain doctrines of the Articles to be true, even when they do not profeſſedly treat upon any diſtinguiſhing points of doctrine. But this does not appear to be the modern ſtrain of preaching, adopted by the higher orders of the Clergy. Though their Sermons are, for the moſt part, preached upon particular occaſions; yet ſome of thoſe occaſions, have afforded a very fit opportunity for inſiſting upon the peculiar doctrines of the Articles. But if we examine the Diſcourſes which have been preached upon days of publick humiliation, we do not find the prevalence of ſin, traced back to the *original* guilt and depravity of human nature, as its ſource; but repreſented as ariſing from the following of *Adam*, and the evil examples of his poſterity, in *apparent oppoſition* to the ninth Article of the Church of *England*. We find the people directed, to put away their ſins by the good work of reformation; but without any intimation of the neceſſity of being juſtified by Faith only, as *previouſly* neceſſary to its being pleaſing and acceptable to God in Chriſt; and without leading them to ſeek that powerful operation of the Grace of Chriſt, and the *inſpiration* or re-

regenerating influence of his Spirit, before and without which their works are not pleaſant to God, but have the nature of ſin. This is in *apparent oppoſition* to the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth Articles of the Church of *England*.

Another fit occaſion preſents itſelf, for inſiſting on the peculiar doctrines of the glorious Goſpel of the Bleſſed God, committed to their truſt; at the *Anniverſary meeting of the Society for propagating the Goſpel in foreign Parts*. It would be natural to expect both from the deſign of the meeting, and the obvious ſcope of the paſſages of Scripture, commonly choſen to be the theme of the Preacher's diſcourſe, that a *Believer* in all the doctrines of the Articles, ſhould principally inſiſt upon the loſt and miſerable eſtate of man by the Fall, and his own utter impotence to ſave himſelf—on the eternal purpoſe of God to redeem and ſave a choſen people out of every tribe and nation—upon the qualifications of Jeſus Chriſt, to be the Mediator of the new Covenant—upon the all-ſufficient efficacy of his atoning Blood—upon the perfection of his obedience for the juſtification of the ſeed of Iſrael—upon the proviſion of his Holy Spirit, for the renewal and ſanctification of our depraved natures—or upon the ſuitableneſs of the proviſions and promiſes of the Goſpel,

to the ſtate of all mankind—that by theſe animating conſiderations, they might the more effectually convince their Hearers, of the excellence and importance of the deſign of their meeting; and excite them to a chearful concurrence in every meaſure, for promoting and extending the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour. But inſtead of this, how much more frequently are we entertained with a political eſſay, on the propriety of ſending Biſhops into thoſe parts of *America*, where the Goſpel is already preached?

It may be however farther alleged, that their oppoſition ſprang not only from their *belief* of the *truth* of the Articles; but from *an inflexible regard to their duty, as appointed by the State, to be the Guardians of that Faith.* But there are ſome difficulties attending this ſuppoſition. It appears to me not a little ſtrange, that their Lordſhips ſhould limit their guardian care to thoſe who are *without* the Church, and be ſo very negligent of the preſervation of the eſtabliſhed Faith *within the pale* of their own Communion. One may juſtly wonder, that they ſhould be ſo extremely partial, in ſhewing favour to the flocks committed to our charge, as to do the utmoſt in their power, that our Congregations may be fed with ſound doctrine; though the people under their own more imme-

immediate paſtoral inſpection, are permitted to periſh for lack of knowledge.

It is conjectured from the general ſtrain of preaching of the parochial Clergy, that their Lordſhips do not greatly intereſt themſelves, in ſeeing that the Clergy of their reſpective Dioceſes, preſerve an *invariable* reſpect to the doctrine of the Thirty-nine Articles. If the *Tewkeſbury* Informers ſhould ſucceed in the proſecution they have lately commenced, and be ſo elated with their ſucceſs as to make a parochial viſitation throughout the Kingdom; it is much to be feared that were they to preſent every violation of the Canon Law, they would leave every Dioceſe without a Biſhop, and near nine thouſand Pariſhes without a Prieſt. It may perhaps be alſo juſtly queried, whether their Lordſhips religiouſly regard the Canon, which prohibits them from ordaining any perſons, who are not "able to yield an account of their "faith in *Latin*, *according to the Thirty-nine* "*Articles*, *and to confirm the ſame by ſufficient* "*Teſtimonies out of the holy Scriptures.* *" Many Clergymen ſeem to know very little about the Articles; certainly not enough to give an account of their Faith in them as the Canon requires. But my difficulty on this head prin-

* Canon XXXIV of 1603.

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cipally ariſes, from obſerving that ſuch of the Laity, as are attached to the Calviniſtical doctrines of the Articles, are for the moſt part conſtrained to deſert their own Pariſh Churches, aud to flock after ſome particular Preachers; who on account of their adherence to thoſe doctrines, are ſtigmatized with opprobrious names, and hardly acknowledged by their Brethren, as Miniſters of the Church of *England*. Now theſe have been ſo far from meeting with that countenance which they might juſtly expect, and have juſtly deſerved from the *Guardians of the Faith of the Church of England*, that ſome of their Lordſhips have occaſionally preached *againſt* them, and cenſured their principles, as deſerving no better a name than *puritanical Fanaticiſm*.

Again, if their Lordſhips are really ſolicitous to maintain this character, why is the ridiculous cuſtom of chanting Prayers, and the uſe of Organs ſtill continued in the Church? So long as theſe are continued, every Cathedral, and every Pariſh Church in which an Organ is played, will be witneſſes againſt them. For have not their Lordſhips repeatedly, and moſt ſolemnly ſubſcribed to the truth of the Thirty-fifth Article of the Church of *England*, which aſſerts that "the Book of Homilies doth contain "a godly and wholeſome doctrine?" And is it not

not one branch of that godly and wholeſome doctrine, that chanting, and playing upon the Organs, *ſorely diſpleaſe God*, and *filthily defile his holy Houſe**? To act conſiſtently therefore with the

* " Finally, God's vengeance hath been, and is daily " provoked, becauſe much wicked people paſs nothing to " reſort to the Church, either for that they are ſo ſore " blinded that they underſtand nothing of God and God- " lineſs, and care not with deviliſh example to offend their " neighbours, or elſe for that they ſee the Church alto- " gether ſcoured of ſuch gay gazing ſights, as their groſs " phantaſy was greatly delighted with, becauſe they ſee " the falſe Religion abandoned, and the true reſtored, " which ſeemeth an unſavoury thing to their unſavoury " taſte; as may appear by this, that a woman ſaid unto " her neighbour: Alas! goſſip, what ſhall we do at " Church, ſince all the ſaints are taken away, ſince all the " goodly ſights we were wont to have, are gone; ſince we " cannot hear the like piping, ſinging, *chaunting, and* " *playing upon the organs*, that we could before. But, dearly " beloved, we ought greatly to rejoice and give God thanks " that our Churches are delivered out of all thoſe things " which *diſpleaſed God ſo ſore, and filthily defiled his holy* " *Houſe and his place of Prayer*, for which he hath juſtly " deſtroyed many nations, according to the ſaying of " St. *Paul*, (1 Cor. iii.) If any man defile the temple of " God, God will him deſtroy. And this ought we greatly " to praiſe God for, that ſuch ſuperſtitions and idolatrous " manners as were utterly naught, and defaced God's " Glory, are utterly aboliſhed, as they moſt juſtly deſerved " See The ſecond part of the Homily, *Of the place and time of* " *Prayer*. Edit. 4. p. 304.

Were the good Woman ſpoken of in the Homily to riſe from the dead, how would it rejoice her heart, to go into St,

the character of Guardians of the faith of the Church, they ſhould baniſh all ſinging Men and Boys from their Cathedrals, and command every Organ in their reſpective Dioceſes, to be taken away.

My difficulty on this head is increaſed, by reflecting that it is an indiſputable truth, That ſuch young Clergymen as really believe

St. *Paul*'s, and ſee ſo much of the old Religion which was abandoned in her time, happily reſtored in theſe latter days!

It is remarkable, that the Thirty-fifth Article injoins the reading of the Homilies "in Churches by the Miniſters, "*diligently and diſtinctly*, that they may be underſtanded of "the people." But any Miniſter methinks would cut a very awkward and ridiculous figure, to read this Homily diſtinctly in St. *Paul*'s Church, after the chanting of Prayers, and the performance of an Anthem.

This Homily likewiſe furniſhes us with a ſtriking inſtance, of the inconſiſtencies into which thoſe Men naturally fall, who are accuſtomed to ſubſcribe in the groſs. For many zealous Churchmen, who would not for all the World knowingly have ſaid any thing diſreſpectful of the doctrines of the Church, have nevertheleſs earneſtly and angrily contended for the practices, ſo ſeverely condemned in the Homily. Bp. *Atterbury* has left us a curious Sermon, upon the *Uſefulneſs* of Church Muſick; which is throughout a perfect contraſt to the Doctrine of the Homily. (See Vol. IV. S. 9.) Another of a ſimilar ſtrain, was publiſhed ſome years ago by a Minor Canon of *Worceſter*, preached at the annual Meeting of the three Choirs of *Worceſter*, *Glouceſter*, and *Hereford*. And innumerable other teſtimonies might be produced from the Writings of the Clergy, in proof of this Obſervation.

the

the Calviniſtical doctrines of the Articles, however ſerious, or well qualified for their profeſſion, have found it next to impoſſible to procure Ordination, if their principles were known by the Dioceſan, to whom their title was directed. Some of them have indeed found ſhelter, in the confidence uſually repoſed in his Lordſhip's Chaplain; and ſo have ſtolen into orders, by virtue of ſome private recommendation to him, without ſaying a word of their *Orthodoxy* *.

Again,

* A young Clergyman of my acquaintance, who from his Childhood was diſtinguiſhed by ſuperior powers of genius, and whoſe moral character is in all reſpects unexceptionable, informed me that he was refuſed Ordination, on account of his belief of certain doctrines of the Articles. After he had paſſed through the uſual examination by the Chaplain, the ———— came into the room, and queſtioned him very minutely concerning his Faith. It is not the common practice of his ———— to be ſo very particular, in his examination into the creeds of the Candidates for holy Orders; but he had received a letter, requeſting him to be very cautious whom he ordained, by virtue of that title, of which my young Friend was poſſeſſed. This precaution was owing to an apprehenſion, that ſome perſon would be put in, who would preach what was of old to the Jews a ſtumbling block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs. His ———— paid rather more reſpect to the requeſt of the letter, than to his own character as a Guardian of the Faith of the Church of *England*. For when he found upon particular inquiry, that the Candidate really believed the neceſſity of Divine Influences, and alſo the doctrine of Juſti-

Again, if we conſider the Biſhops under the character of the *Guardians of the Faith of the Church*

Juſtification by Faith, according to the tenth and eleventh Articles of the Church of *England*, after ridiculing both thoſe doctrines, and declaring his diſapprobation of them by ſome compariſons and examples, derived from the qualifications of his Poſtilion, and the conformity of thoſe Articles to the principles held in the time of *Oliver Cromwell*; he abſolutely refuſed to ordain the Candidate, aſſigning as the only reaſon of that refuſal, "That theſe were *fundamental* "*Errors*, and ſuch as he could not in conſcience ſuffer to "be broached in his Dioceſe, as by his authority." But at the ſame time he aſſured him, that if there ſhould be a revolution in his ideas, (*i. e.* if he ſhould become an unbeliever as to theſe doctrines of the Church), he would very readily ordain him. The Candidate in a very ſolemn manner then declared, that his Faith was contained in the Articles of the Church of *England*; and as ſolemnly requeſted his ————, as a Head of that Church, to ordain him a Miniſter of that Church, upon the profeſſion of his belief in them. This was reſented by his ———— as *telling him his duty*. The next day his ———— was reminded by a very reſpectful letter, that the reaſons aſſigned for refuſing Ordination to the Candidate, appeared to be inſufficient to juſtify that refuſal. Since whatever his ————'s own particular ſentiments were, of the principles which the Candidate held; as thoſe principles were confeſſedly agreeable to the Articles, the cenſure, if any was due, muſt fall not upon the Ordainer, but upon the Conſtitution of the Church, which had not made ſufficient proviſion againſt *fundamental Errors*. His ———— however ſtill perſiſted in the refuſal, and the diſappointed Candidate, after a long and expenſive journey, returned to *London re infectâ*; and without receiving any gratuity towards defraying the expence of his loſt labour,

Church of England, how muſt we account for their inexcuſable negligence, in remaining ſilent Spectators of the *Oxford* Expulſion? This was ſuch a blow at the doctrines of the Church, as called aloud for the cenſure of thoſe, who were bound to protect the Faith delivered in the Thirty-nine Articles. What proſpect could there be, that the Church would be ſupplied with ſound and orthodox Miniſters, when all who were known to eſpouſe the genuine doctrines of the Church, were expelled from that renowned Seminary of Religion and Learning? That their *Faith and Devotion* were the true cauſes of their expulſion, is evident from the original accuſation brought againſt the Students by their Tutor; and indeed from the whole tenor of the proceedings againſt them. The

labour, though the door of the Church was ſhut againſt him, merely on account of his believing the doctrines of the Church.

If the above declaration of his ——— be compared with Canon V of 1603, it may furniſh a queſtion for the Canoniſts, Whether any ſubſequent epiſcopal Acts could be valid according to the Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitution? For there is ſome difficulty in conceiving, that any perſon under the ſentence of Excommunication *ipſo facto*, who is in the juſt conſtruction of the Canon Law, a dead and amputated Member of the body of Chriſt, ſhould yet remain poſſeſſed of a lawful authority to abſolve from ſin, and to convey the power of abſolution, and the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghoſt to others.

account

account of ſome circumſtances attending that judicial proceſs, as well as others brought to light by it, can hardly be read by any true friend to Chriſtianity, Virtue, or Decency, without ſenſible emotions of horror. Every good man muſt ſurely be ſhocked to think, that before ſuch a Tribunal, the regal character of Chriſt, (the preſent joy of his diſciples, and future terror of his enemies), ſhould be made the ſubject of the moſt prophane deriſion; and by thoſe too whoſe buſineſs and pleaſure it ſhould be, to proclaim the glories of that King, whom God hath ſet upon his holy hill of Sion. Such an impious contempt of our exalted Saviour, was a much greater crime, than any laid to the charge of thoſe who were expelled. But the Heads of Houſes thought thoſe who were advocates for the Kingly office of Chriſt, were more properly deſerving of ſo ſevere a puniſhment.

When the public attention had been drawn to this remarkable tranſaction by the friends of the injured parties, and the general opinion of good men of every denomination, appeared to be ſtrongly in their favour; the PUBLIC ORATOR of the Univerſity, having moſt dexterouſly gloſſed over the infamous proceedings by ſeveral ſpecious pretences, came forth and bade defiance to the armies of *Iſrael*. The conſequence was, that Mr. *Hill*, like *David* the Stripling, went out, and as with a ſtone in a ſling,

ſling, in the name of the Lord God of *Iſrael*, ſlew *Goliath* the Philiſtine. The ſtone ſunk in his forehead—he fell—and has riſen no more. The victorious Advocate for the perſecuted Students clearly proved, that every other reaſon aſſigned, beſides the faith and piety of the unhappy ſufferers, was nothing better than a pretence, to conceal the true cauſe of their expulſion; and that the learned Apologiſt for this act of ſeverity, had endeavoured to ſecure an honourable retreat by falſhood and miſrepreſentation *.

From

* See *Goliath ſlain* paſſim. And ſo far as the Doctrines of the Church are concerned, the Reader may ſee Dr. *Nowell*'s miſrepreſentations pointed out, with great ſtrength of argument and evidence, by the Rev. Mr. *Toplady* in his *Vindication of the Church of England from the charge of Arminianiſm*. The conſequence of peruſing thoſe tracts, will moſt probably be a clear conviction, that there is hardly a pamphlet of the ſame ſize with the Doctor's in the *Engliſh* language, which contains ſo many egregious blunders. But many of the miſrepreſentations, ought in juſtice to be placed to the ſcore of ignorance, as it plainly appears that the Doctor had then but very lately entered upon the ſtudy of Divinity; nor is it to be ſuppoſed, that he would *knowingly* have vilified the doctrines of that Church, "whoſe "bread he eats, and whoſe raiment he wears." There is one miſrepreſentation however, which it more particularly concerns me as a Proteſtant Diſſenter, to point out to publick notice. Speaking of the Calviniſtical tenets, p. 94, he ſays, "The doctrines which you would father upon "*Cranmer* and *Ridley* were really thoſe of *Prynn*, *Hugh* "*Peters*, *Marſhall*, *Owen*, and others, who compoſed the "aſſembly of Divines, moſt of whom were (according to

From many ſhocking inſtances, it plainly appears, that if the fervour of religious zeal had betrayed

" my Lord *Clarendon)* declared and avowed enemies to the " doctrine and diſcipline of the Church of *England*; ſome " of them infamous in their lives and converſations; and " moſt of them of very mean parts in learning, if not of " ſcandalous ignorance, and of no other reputation than of " malice to the Church of *England*."

The Doctor ſhould have known better, both as an Hiſtorian and a Divine, than to have tranſcribed ſuch a character of ſeveral worthy men, upon the bare authority of ſo partial an Hiſtorian, as my Lord *Clarendon*—a character, which wants the ſingle circumſtance of *truth*, in almoſt every branch of it. For the truth of Hiſtory will permit me only to acknowledge, that they diſapproved the diſcipline of the Church of *England*, as not conformable to the word of God. None of them were enemies to the true original doctrine of that Church, upon the ſeveral points to which Dr. *Nowell* refers; though they were agreed in an oppoſition to Archbiſhop *Laud*'s Innovations, and to that unconſtitutional doctrine which Dr. *Nowell* himſelf preached before the Houſe of Commons, and which that Honourable Houſe ſo juſtly cenſured, as totally inconſiſtent with the principles of the Revolution; to the great joy of every Friend to the Houſe of *Hanover*, and our excellent Conſtitution. It is not true, that moſt of the perſons who compoſed the Aſſembly of Divines, were men of very mean parts. Many of them were men of very conſiderable abilities, of equal learning, as well as of eminent piety. There was no man among them of ſcandalous ignorance—no man of infamous life and converſation—no man but what had a reputation of a much higher and nobler kind, than that of mere malice to the Church of *England*. Their oppoſition to the Church did not ſpring from malice, but from a conſcientious reſpect to what they judged to be the revealed will of God. If the

Doctor

betrayed theſe young men into ſome irregularities; the dominion of ſenſual appetites had betrayed

Doctor meant to ſecure any credit, to his own frequent repreſentation of King *Charles* the Firſt, as the beſt of Kings; or to his compliment to that pontifical Tyrant, Archbiſhop *Laud*, as the brighteſt ornament of the Church of *England*; he ſhould have ſpared the mention of the name of *Prynn*; as the ſufferings of that able Lawyer, bear very hard upon the character both of the bleſſed Martyr, and of his favourite Prelate. A pious King could never have thought, that the cenſure of lewd Actreſſes, was a crime deſerving of ſo ſevere a puniſhment as a fine of 5000*l.* ſtanding in the pillory, loſing two ears, and being impriſoned for life. Nor can it be forgotten, that *Laud*'s pious motive for inflicting theſe heavy penalties, was no other than reſentment of *Prynn*'s vindication of the true faith of the Church of *England*; and that in order to gratify the worſt of paſſions, this brighteſt ornament of the Church of *England*, did not ſtick at telling the King a moſt notorious falſhood, That the book in which the cenſure of lewd Actreſſes was contained, was purpoſely written againſt the Queen; though he knew it was publiſhed ſix weeks before the Queen acted a part in a paſtoral at *Somerſet* Houſe. I truſt the Church of *Englaud* has had much brighter ornaments than this antichriſtian Perſecutor, and zealous Patron of ſuperſtition and prophaneneſs; and I pray God that ſhe may never have ſuch another ornament as he was.

It is moſt aſtoniſhing to ſee the name of Dr. *Owen* bring up the rear of this liſt, as if ſome, or all of Lord *Clarendon*'s opprobrious characteriſticks, were applicable to him. Whereas all who are acquainted with the Doctor's true character and writings, very well know that he was not only a Chriſtian of unſullied reputation for the practice of true piety; but likewiſe a Scholar of great parts, extenſive reading, and uncommon application; a very conſiderable Linguiſt; an able Divine well ſkilled in theological

betrayed many more into worſe, which were nevertheleſs only made the ſubjects of mirth. So that if the former were juſtly charged with a violation of the Statutes, yet had our Saviour's rule been obſerved, that he who was without

controverſies, and in all branches of Jewiſh antiquities; a moſt fair and genteel Diſputant; a ſolid and judicious Writer; and held in ſuch eſtimation by foreign Proteſtants, that when he was ſilenced by the Act of Uniformity, he was invited to a Profeſſorſhip in the United Provinces. Nor was he leſs diſtinguiſhed by his amiable temper, and great moderation when at the ſummit of his power towards the Epiſcopalians. Let me alſo obſerve, that he conducted himſelf with the higheſt reputation for wiſdom and prudence, as Vice Chancellor of *Oxford* for the ſpace of five years. So that I am fully perſuaded, there was no connivance at gaming, lewdneſs, &c. in his time; nor any expulſion for praying, reading, and expounding the Scriptures. If the Principal of St. *Mary* Hall, ſhould in any future period betake himſelf to the ſtudy of the Scriptures, and happen to lay his hands upon Dr. *Owen*'s Expoſition of the *Hebrews*, I perſuade myſelf he will bluſh to think, that he ſhould have mentioned the Author in ſuch diſreſpectful terms. To this long note I will only add, that from the purport of the quotation from Lord *Clarendon*, as well as from the grammatical conſtruction of the ſentence, upon which theſe obſervations are grounded; the Reader would be naturally led to conclude, that all the perſons whoſe names are there inmentioned, were members of the Aſſembly of Divines. Whereas in truth, Mr. *Marſhall* (a Man of an excellent character) is the only one among them, who had a ſeat in that Aſſembly. I hope Dr. *Nowell* for his own credit, will both think and read, before he writes again on ſubjects and characters, with which he ſeems at preſent to be ſo little acquainted.

ſin,

ſin, ſhould have thrown the firſt ſtone; it is probable, the Accuſer, and the Judges, would have retired one by one, and left the ſix young men ſtanding alone. A Friend to real Religion, could have been at no loſs to have found out a ſufficient excuſe, for ſome few innocent deviations from Statutes, which are ſo little attended to, that the young men might probably be ignorant they were guilty of any offence againſt them; eſpecially as they had the teſtimony of a good conſcience, that they were guilty of no violation of the law of God. But how will poſterity bluſh to read, that gaming, rioting, and lewdneſs were conſtantly connived at, though in direct violation of the Statutes; and that drunkenneſs in one inſtance, could be admitted as an excuſe for blaſphemous expreſſions; and a drunken blaſphemer without any difficulty, obtain a Teſtimonium to qualify him for holy orders—while no quarter was given, and no mercy ſhewn, to ſuch as choſe to ſpend a ſocial hour in the exerciſes of Devotion, rather than at a Card-table, and in ſcenes of riot and intemperance! Thus however did the Univerſity of *Oxford* publickly declare, that infidelity, and every ſpecies of immorality, are more tolerable in that ſeminary of *Religion*, than the true faith of the Articles of the Church of *England*, or the ſpirit and practice of true devotion. Nay to avoid the moſt diſtant appearance of giving

countenance to religious exerciſes, we are left to conclude, that the drunken blaſphemer was requeſted and perſuaded by the Heads of Houſes, not to leave the infected Hall; in order that he might help to recover the *credit* of that Houſe, from the odium brought upon it by the religious Tenets, and devotional temper of the young men who were expelled. It is therefore now a point moſt ſolemnly determined, that for Students in the Univerſity to believe the Calviniſtical Articles, and to pray, read, and expound the Scriptures in a private Houſe, are crimes of a more horrid nature, and more aggravated guilt, than to get drunk, to frequent Brothels, to beget Baſtards, or blaſpheme the power of God—crimes, which for their enormity, muſt even be put upon a level with that of adminiſtering the ſacrament of the Lord's Supper to an Aſs, in prophane contempt of a divine Inſtitution. But is it poſſible that any Proteſtant, that any Chriſtian, can reconcile ſuch a deciſion either with the principles of ſound morality, or the peculiar doctrines of revealed Religion? Surely not. Yet as this judgment was given by perſons, who have ſolemnly ſubſcribed their belief of the Thirty-nine Articles, who have taken orders in the Church of *England*, and profeſs the ſtrongeſt attachment to the doctrine and diſcipline of that Church, and one of whom is alſo a publick Profeſſor of Divinity; would

would it not be *naturally* inferred, that this deciſion muſt certainly be agreeable to the doctrine of the Church of *England?* Had I therefore been a Dioceſan Biſhop, and accounted myſelf one of the appointed Guardians of the Faith of that Church, I would have exhorted all my Brethren inſtantly to have joined with me, in bearing a publick teſtimony againſt ſuch an irreligious, and immoral determination. And if they had refuſed their concurrence, I would have ſtood forth alone, in vindication of the true doctrine, and purer morality of the Reformed Church. Yet all theſe things, have paſſed to this day *uncenſured*, by the publick *Guardians of the Faith of the Church of England*; while every friend to Religion, and religious Liberty, pities the unhappy ſufferers, condemns the cruel and partial treatment they met with, and thinks the whole tranſaction, an indelible blot upon the reputation of the firſt Univerſity of the Realm.

When theſe remarkable inſtances are conſidered, in which the Faith of the Church has been left to ſhift for itſelf, without any ſuccour from it's Guardians, and even when engaged in the ſharpeſt conflict with the rage of perſecution; it ſeems to be very aſtoniſhing, that any of their Lordſhips ſhould have been ſeized with ſo ſudden a tenderneſs for their reputation

in this character, as to make it a plea for oppoſing the relief of their Diſſenting Brethren. I would with all due humility ſuggeſt to their Lordſhips, the impropriety of the means they have choſen to approve themſelves faithful to their truſt. There are many others, which ſeem to claim the preference to that of laying reſtraints upon the conſciences of their Fellow-chriſtians, and holding thoſe in continued ſubjection to heavy penalties, who cannot conſcientiouſly ſubſcribe the Articles of the Church. Suppoſing their Lordſhips had rather tried the expedient of conſtant preaching every Lord's Day, in ſome part of their reſpective Dioceſes, in defence of the doctrines of the Articles—a prudent caution not to admit any perſons into holy Orders, who ſhould be found either ignorant of the Faith of the Church, or diſaffected to it; or a ſcandal to the miniſterial character, by a diſſipation of manners, totally inconſiſtent with the genuine power and practice of Religion—a more frequent parochial Viſitation—and a ſtricter conformity to the canonical Injunctions, of ſuſpending all ſcandalous and immoral Clergymen. Would not ſuch means as theſe, have redounded more to their own honour, and to the credit and reputation of that Church, whoſe Guardians and Governors they profeſs themſelves to be? Theſe are means too, which have been already pointed out to

them by one of their worthy Predeceſſors, who was himſelf a ſhining example to his Cotemporaries and Succeſſors, of a moſt faithful and diligent reſpect to all the duties of the epiſcopal Function *.

The danger of truſting men to interpret the Bible for themſelves, has, I think, with great impropriety been urged upon this occaſion. So far from there being any juſt ground for this apprehenſion, it may be truly ſaid, that all the miſchiefs apprehended, have really ariſen from the decrees of Councils, from the eſtabliſhment of human Teſts, and the impoſition of human Creeds upon the conſciences of Chriſtians. Thus alone has the benevolent religion of Jeſus, been made the innocent occaſion of civil diſcord, and confuſion. Thus too has that *Odium Theologicum* been gendered, which " like " a poiſonous tree, has reared it's head and " ſpread it's arms, and the neighbouring plants, " inſtead of receiving ſhelter and protection, " have ſickened and withered beneath it's " baleful influence; yet has it proved a friendly " covering to weeds and nettles, and the fox

* See Bp. *Burnet*'s excellent Treatiſe, intitled, *The Paſtoral Care*; and his moſt ſerious and pathetick Addreſs to the Biſhops, in the Concluſion of the *Hiſtory of his own Times*.

" lodges

" lodges ſafely at it's root, and birds of ill " omen ſcream in it's branches *."

Beſides, if the various explications of Scripture, ſhould be thought to render an eſtabliſhed interpretation indiſpenſably neceſſary, to ſecure an uniformity of Faith and profeſſion; there is at leaſt an equal neceſſity, for an eſtabliſhed interpretation of the Articles; ſince the Clergy are contending to this very day, about their proper meaning and ſignification. But in order to magnify the importance of requiring ſubſcription to human Creeds, the *Guardians of the Faith of the Church of England*, have, it ſeems, ſacrificed the truth of one of the moſt excellent and important Articles of the Church. " Holy Scripture," ſay the Compilers, " containeth all things " neceſſary to Salvation; ſo that whatſoever is " not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, " is not to be required of any man, that it " ſhould be believed as an Article of the Faith, " or be thought requiſite or neceſſary to Salva- " tion †." Falſe doctrines, and ſuperſtitious inventions of men, have much to fear from a due reſpect to this excellent Article of the Church. But the intereſts of religious truth will always gain ground, in proportion to our

* Dr. *Jortin* ubi ſupra, p. 27.

† Art. VI.

attach-

attachment to the Scriptures. I have the happineſs to know that I ſpeak the language of a Biſhop. For when the moſt ancient, and one of the moſt learned of the preſent Bench, celebrated the praiſes of Queen *Elizabeth*, for the part ſhe took in the Reformation; he expreſſed himſelf to the ſame purpoſe. "She employed the learned, the pious, and the wiſe, "to examine all over again, by the ſureſt teſt "of truth, the Holy Scriptures. And the event "was, (what muſt ever be the event, when "ſincerity is employed in the ſearch,) that "many falſe doctrines were (like bad wares) "returned upon the hands of the Italian manufacturers in Religion *."

The ſame apprehenſion, another Divine of the Church of *England*, plainly entertained of the great importance of ſearching and adhering to the Scriptures, rather than to truſt to the deciſions of men; when he thus addreſſed his Congregation.

"It is by the eſpecial bleſſing of Heaven, "that ye have the free uſe of your *Bibles*, "while the people of many other nations are "deprived of it by the tyranny of *the Church* "*of Rome*, which would make it *of none effect*

* Bp. *Pearce*'s Jubilee Sermon, p. 9.

"*by*

" *by her Traditions.* And to prevent the moſt
" ignorant of our Brethren from being led aſtray
" by her buſy Seducers, permit me to illuſtrate
" the caſe of the *Prieſts of the Church of Rome*,
" endeavouring to take from you your *Bibles*,
" and our bidding you to hold them faſt, in
" a plain and familiar inſtance: Should a
" Stranger in your walks on a ſun-ſhining day,
" accoſt you and ſay, that the Sun is hot and
" troubleſome, and ſhines ſo clearly as to en-
" danger your eye-ſight; and therefore if you
" would ſhut your eyes and give him your hand,
" he would ſhew you the right way: Would you
" not think the man mad, or ſomething worſe?
" I will not miſtruſt your underſtandings ſo far
" as to make the application, but only obſerve,
" that it would be but common prudence to
" keep your eyes open, and look carefully
" about you in ſuch ſuſpicious company. Make
" uſe of *your own* eyes, and diligently read
" your *Bibles*, for the true Chriſtian Faith;
" prove all things by it, and examine thoroughly
" the great points in debate between the *Church*
" *of Rome* and us, and ye will plainly diſcover,
" that though *Chriſt's Kingdom is not of this*
" *World*, yet his pretended Vicar's is; that
" wealth and dominion are in truth the great
" power which he adores, and that all his
" doctrines with which he hath perverted, I had
" like to have ſaid, deſtroyed Chriſtianity, are

" viſibly

" viſibly calculated to magnify and enrich " himſelf. But whither am I going?—if my " zeal for God's word hath carried me out too " far, forgive me this wrong: to be zealouſly " affected in ſo good a cauſe is truly laudable " and praiſe-worthy; and may the bleſſing of " Heaven always accompany us in this good " *zeal*, and direct us in it *according to know-* " *ledge* *." I will not miſtruſt the Reader's underſtanding, ſo far as to make the application in the preſent caſe; but only add my cordial *Amen* to this moſt excellent and truly Proteſtant prayer.

The novelty of an objection to ſubſcribing the Articles, has been urged with equal vehemence, againſt aboliſhing the preſent requiſition. If there was any truth in the objection, it would be nothing at all to the purpoſe; if ſuch a ſubſcription appeared to us, to be inconſiſtent with the reverence which we owe to God, and to the dictates of our own conſciences. But there is not that novelty in the objection, which has been ſuppoſed and aſſerted. When the famous John Fox the Martyrologiſt, was ſummoned to ſubſcribe by the Queen's direction, the venerable old man produced his *Greek* Teſtament, and ſaid, " *To this I will ſubſcribe.*" And

* Dr. *Bearcroft*'s Sermon at the yearly Meeting of the Charity Schools, 1748, page 16.

when

when a ſubſcription to the Canons was required, he refuſed it, ſaying, "I have nothing in the "Church, ſave a Prebend at *Saliſbury*, and "much good may it do you, if you will take "it away from me*." Nor was he the only inſtance in the Church. But, "Our Forefathers "intirely approved the Articles." So ſay the modern advocates for ſubſcription. But mark in how different a language, a rigid Churchman, above a century and a half ago, poured out his bitter complaint againſt them, to a tyrannical Prelate of thoſe times.

"In the years 1571, and 1572, when *Sub-* "*ſcription* firſt was required, the whole Land "will witneſs, that many, and ſundry books "(as well in *Latin*, as *Engliſh*) then, and after- "wards flew abroad. In which we read, how "then, and in thoſe days, the truth of God did "in a manner but *peep out* (as it were) at the "*Screen*; that *Cranmer*, *Parker*, *Grindal*, and "all the other *Martyrs*, *Preachers*, and Learned "Men, (which firſt in our age brought the "light of the *Goſpel* into the *Realm*) did ſee "a little, and had a glimpſe of the truth, but "overſaw many things, which in theſe days of "the *ſun-ſhine* of the *Goſpel*, men of meaner "gifts do ſee; and yet may not utter them

* See *Fuller*'s Church Hiſtory, B. IX. p. 76.

"without

" without great danger of the *Laws* (through " the iniquity of the times) though the ſaid " things now ſeen be comprized in the *Book* of " God, and alſo be a part of the *Goſpel*, yea the " very *Goſpel* itſelf, (ſo true are they) and of " ſuch importance, as *if every hair of our heads* " *were a Life*, (ſay the Brethren) we ought to " afford them in defence of theſe matters; the " *Articles of Religion* penned, and agreed upon " by the *Biſhops and Clergy*, and ratified by the " *Prince*, and *Parliament*, in compariſon of " theſe things now revealed, and newly come to " light, are but childiſh and Toys.—They ſay " alſo that the *Civil Magiſtrate* is none *Officer* " at all in the Church. For *Church Officers* be " *Non Magnates, aut Tetrarchæ*, not *gracious* " or *honourable Lords*, but *Miniſters of* the " *Church*. And that their controverſy is, " whether JESUS CHRIST ſhall be King, or no." Theſe he calls the uncouth doctrines of the factious Brethren *.

Let it be farther obſerved, that ſoon after the Toleration Act took place, Mr. *Baxter* drew up a brief explication of his ſenſe of the Articles, in anſwer to the ſcruples propoſed to him by ſome, who were called upon to ſubſcribe them. This

* *Rogers*'s Preface to his *Faith, Doctrine, and Religion*, &c. dedicated to the famous Abp. BANCROFT, p. 9, 11.

he gave in at the time of ſubſcribing, to teſtify his diſapprobation of the plain literal ſenſe; and it is ſaid that fourſcore Diſſenting Miniſters in *London*, concurred with him in his objections and explication. He has objected to almoſt all the Articles which I have reviewed, and to ſeveral others which I have not taken into conſideration; and has prefaced his explication, with a truly Proteſtant precaution againſt taking the Articles to be inſtead of the Scriptures, a neceſſary rule of Divine Faith; at the ſame time declaring his wiſh, that God's own word were taken for the ſufficient terms of our conſent and concord, in order to union and communion *.

Many Diſſenting Miniſters, appear to have been reconciled to a ſubſcription to the Articles, by apprehending they ſhould be conſidered as ſubſcribing them according to that explication. But there is no ſufficient foundation for ſuch an apprehenſion; nor is any qualified ſenſe or explication ever admitted.

As the temper and ſpirit of the times are much in favour of religious liberty; few, if any, of the moſt zealous advocates for ſubſcription, will openly avow their approbation of perſecution for conſcience ſake. But yet they think *ſome*

* See *Baxter*'s Practical Works, Vol. IV. p. 957.

reſtraint

reſtraint ſhould be laid, and *ſome dominion exerciſed* over the conſciences of men. Such perſons ſeem nearly to approach to the principles of *Valeſius*, who was offended with *Socrates* the Hiſtorian, becauſe he cenſured *Theodoſius* for perſecuting the *Macedonians*. He would neither wholly juſtify *Theodoſius*, nor yet agree with *Socrates*, who ſpoke like an utter enemy to every kind of perſecution. But *Diſtinguendum eſt*, cried *Valeſius*, i. e. you muſt not thirſt after the blood of Hereticks, but you muſt implore the aid of the Magiſtrate to reſtrain and keep them in order; and inſtead of alluring them by all kinds of gentle methods, they muſt be incited and attracted by the puniſhments and mulcts of the Imperial Laws; becauſe he had learned by experience, that theſe had proved the happy occaſion of their converſion. This art of diſtinguiſhing, is finely ridiculed by the elegant pen of our own Hiſtorian, Dr. *Jortin*.

" What is to be done then with one who is, " or who is accounted or whiſpered to be " erroneous? Why, *Diſtinguendum eſt:* you " muſt not ſhed his blood, nor enrich yourſelf " with his ſpoils; but you may contrive other " ways to bring him to a right mind, or to " beggary: Ways, which reſemble the method " of *Italian* Aſſaſſins, to beat a man with " ſatchels of ſand: no blood is ſhed, and no

" bones are broken, but the patient dies by " the operation. A Gentleman and a Scholar, " as *Valeſius* was, ſhould have nothing to do " with ſuch *diſtinctions:* he ought rather to " *diſtinguiſh* himſelf from the vulgar by a larger " mind, by deteſting perſecution in every ſhape, " were it only for this reaſon, that it is the " bane of letters *."

To the ſame purpoſe ſpeaks a celebrated Prelate, when, among other reflections upon a memorable period of our own hiſtory, he ſuggeſts the following improvement of it.

" It muſt remind the Governors of the " eſtabliſhed Church, that rigorous treatment " of ſuch as diſſent from it, and endeavours to " extend their own authority, or influence, " beyond reaſonable bounds, are methods as " contrary to Prudence, as they are to Religion: " that neither Learning, nor Piety, nor eminence " in other virtues, will be able to ſupport " them, without a ſuitable degree of *Humility* " and *Forbearance*; but that care to be in- " offenſive, and diligence to be uſeful, are their " true ſtrength †."

* Dr. *Jortin* ubi ſupra, p. 30, 31.

† Bp. of *Oxford*'s (Dr. *Secker*) Sermon before the Houſe of Lords, *May* 29, 1739, p. 10.

Nor would I do ſo much injuſtice to the character of a modern Prelate, as to omit the teſtimony which he has given, to the propriety of the ſame inferences, drawn from the ſame events. " They are, ſays he, a conſtant leſſon " to us, that *liberty ſhould not be uſed for a cloke* " *of maliciouſneſs*, nor power be exerted without " moderation: that all indulgence ſhould be " ſhewn to tender conſciences; but that tolera- " tion ſhould not be made a ſcreen to licen- " tiouſneſs and prophaneneſs: that *conſciences* " *ſhould be won by truth, time, inſtruction, and* " *perſuaſion, not forced by authority* *."

It ſhould ſeem too, that the Church of *England* is an eſtabliſhment of ſuch a nature, as does not ſtand in need of any ſuch methods for its ſupport; if the view given of her conſtitution, and the character of a Church of Chriſt, delineated by a learned Doctor, are both agreeable to truth and fact.

" The true Church of *Chriſt* pretends no " divine commiſſion to entrench upon the na- " tural or civil rights of men; diſpenſing an " authority of *reaſon to perſuade*, not of *dominion* " *to over-rule* private judgments; and thankful " for the borrowed aids of ſuch an eſtabliſh-

* Dr. *Drummond*'s (now Lord Archbiſhop of *York*) Sermon before the Houſe of Commons, *January* 30, 1747-8, p. 20.

" ment, as can maintain the exerciſe and effect
" of her ſacred functions, without forcing the
" inviolable dictates of conſcience *."

After ſuch profeſſions, and many more to the ſame purpoſe, made by men thoroughly attached to the Church, it will be difficult to find any conſiſtent plea for maintaining a dominion over conſcience, in violation of the rights of private judgment; and without the leaſt indulgence to tenderneſs of conſcience. If there was indeed any reaſon to apprehend, that what really deſerves the name of Fanaticiſm, would gain ground by taking off the reſtraints of penal Statutes; I would even then recommend to the conſideration of the Guardians of the Faith of the Church of *England*, another noble paſſage in one of my favourite Writers before quoted, well adapted to this point.

" Worſe than Fanatical Fervour is the ſedate
" ſpirit of religious tyranny, ariſing from the
" luſt of dominion, from ſordid ſelf-intereſt,
" and from atheiſtical politicks, taking it's
" meaſures, and purſuing it's ends deliberately,
" void of all regard to truth, and of every
" tender ſentiment of pity and humanity †."

* Dr. *Tunſtall*'s Sermon before the Houſe of Commons, *May* 29, 1746, p. 15.

† Dr. *Jortin* ubi ſupra, p. 34.

How

How any political inconveniencies can be ſuppoſed to ariſe, from granting a requeſt which has no other object, than the preſervation of the ſacred rights of conſcience, is difficult to conceive. The political intereſts of the nation have much more to fear, when men are tempted to hypocriſy and prevarication, in order to the ſecurity of their perſons and property. The reſtraints of Law itſelf, are more feeble than the reſtraints of conſcience; and when the beſt of principles have loſt their effect upon the one, the ſevereſt ſanctions of the other, will be inſufficient to ſecure a general obſervance. "That "Virtue is the ſtrongeſt ſupport of Govern-"ment, and the countenancing of virtue the "ſoundeſt policy; is a truth obvious to vulgar "obſervation; a truth, ſo fixed in the nature "of things by the juſtice of God, that it will "make its force felt by every ſociety, and "every individual *." Now it can hardly be denied to be a ſtriking evidence of the moſt virtuous integrity, when men voluntarily expoſe their own perſons and property to danger, rather than obtain a legal ſecurity, upon condition of a ſubſcription to Articles, which in their conſciences they do not on many accounts approve. How then ſhall we account for it, that thoſe who eſteem "Virtue to be the ſureſt

* Dr. *Drummond* ubi ſupra.

"pre-

" preſervative of national order and ſtrength," and have therefore exhorted us " to give all " diligence to cultivate it;" ſhould nevertheleſs both by vote and influence, do their utmoſt to leave their Fellow-chriſtians open to penalties and impriſonment, merely on account of their conſcientious adherence to it's ſacred obligations? Can this inconſiſtency be reſolved into any thing, but thoſe political views, which " give them up a prey to that party rage, or, " as ſome affect to call it, party honour; (for " honour is too often proſtituted to the moſt " diſhonourable purpoſes) that party rage and " party honour, which having once gained " a full aſcendant, lead even reaſonable and " otherwiſe honeſt men into the moſt abſurd " and unjuſtifiable conduct *?" Such an influence, it ſhould ſeem, may with juſtice be applied to more caſes than one. In the preſent day there is a peculiar impropriety in diſcountenancing the claims of conſcience; ſo numerous are the evils which daily ariſe to our view, which are the effect of a general want of principle, in every claſs of life. And I am ſorry to ſay, that it is not unuſual with many of the Laity, to urge the example of the Clergy, in ſubſcribing to Articles which they do not believe, for the ſake of a Living; as a kind of authority for diſregarding the dictates of conſcience—a

* Dr. *Drummond* ubi ſupra, p. 23.

conduct

conduct which has too often brought the reality of Religion into queſtion, by men of a ſceptical turn; and the character of many of the Clergy too juſtly into contempt, with thoſe who deteſt every ſpecies of perjury and falſhood. Lectures of Morality loſe much of their force, when it is known that the Preacher is indebted for his preferment, to ſuch arts of diſſimulation and prevarication, as would for ever reprobate the character of a Tradeſman, in any commercial tranſactions. Such a Preacher will be conſidered by his Hearers, in no other light than as merely *acting a Part*. Excuſes may be urged; but the opiates which have been ſo frequently adminiſtered, will no longer take effect. The Articles are now more read, than they have ever been ſince they were firſt ſet forth by authority; and the intelligent Laity cannot fail of diſcerning, how notoriouſly they diſagree with the general tenor of their publick inſtructions. And though the unbelieving Clergy generally keep them out of ſight as much as poſſible; others who are deſpiſed for preaching ſome of the doctrines they contain, are conſtrained to appeal to them, in their own juſt vindication.

If it ſhould after all be ſuggeſted, that the Guardians of the Faith of the Church of *England* did not act voluntarily in their oppoſition to us; but

but were *conſtrained* to it, by ſome ſuperior power; it becomes me to do nothing more, than addreſs the Church in the language of ſympathetick lamentation.

Tu mihi quæ imperitas, aliis ſervis miſer, atque
Duceris, ut nervis alienis mobile lignum.

In every view, the application of the Proteſtant Diſſenting Miniſters appears to be reaſonable in itſelf; and all the objections to it frivolous and groundleſs. The preſent conditions of Toleration, muſt be conſidered as an infringement upon the natural rights of conſcience, if there was no objection to the *matter* of ſubſcription. And I hope the Reader is fully convinced, that many of the Articles to which our ſubſcription is required, muſt be liable to exception by every Proteſtant Diſſenting Miniſter. We therefore chearfully appeal to the determination of every liberal mind, whether our objections are of ſuch a nature, as to juſtify the ſeverity of the Laws againſt us. And we readily ſubmit our caſe to the deciſion of all the friends of Virtue, whether we do not act a more honourable part, when ſo reaſonable a requeſt is denied, in ſtill refuſing to comply with the requiſition of Law; rather than to imitate the example of thoſe, who *through covetouſneſs with feigned*

feigned words, make merchandize * of the ſouls of men. It is both my fervent wiſh and prayer, that Proteſtant Diſſenting Miniſters may *herein exerciſe themſelves, to have always a conſcience void of offence both towards God, and towards men* †—not *teaching for doctrines the commandments of men* ‡; *nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifeſtation of the truth, commending themſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God* §. That ſo, in whatever opprobrious light they may be viewed by the State, and whatever penalties they may incur by the Laws of the Land, yet *when the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, they may receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away* ‖; and hear him ſay unto them, *Well done, good and faithful ſervants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord* ¶.

* 2 Peter ii. 3. † Acts xxiv. 16. ‡ Mat. xv. 9.
§ 2 Cor. iv. 2. ‖ 1 Pet. v. 4. ¶ Mat. xxv. 21.

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

Page 16. l. 18. *for* were *read* was
25. l. 22. *for* venture add *read* venture to add
72. note, l. 4. *for* αὐτόθεον *read* αὐτόθεος
75. l. 4. *dele* The reaſon of
77. l. 12. *for* inpregnable *read* impregnable
168. l. 9. *for* orignally *read* originally
171. l. 8. *for* Que *read* Qui
191. l. 18. *for* 12 Hen. *read* 2 Hen.
199. l. 16. *for* a Believer *read* Believers

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